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Backstreets

#52 WINTER/SPRING 1996

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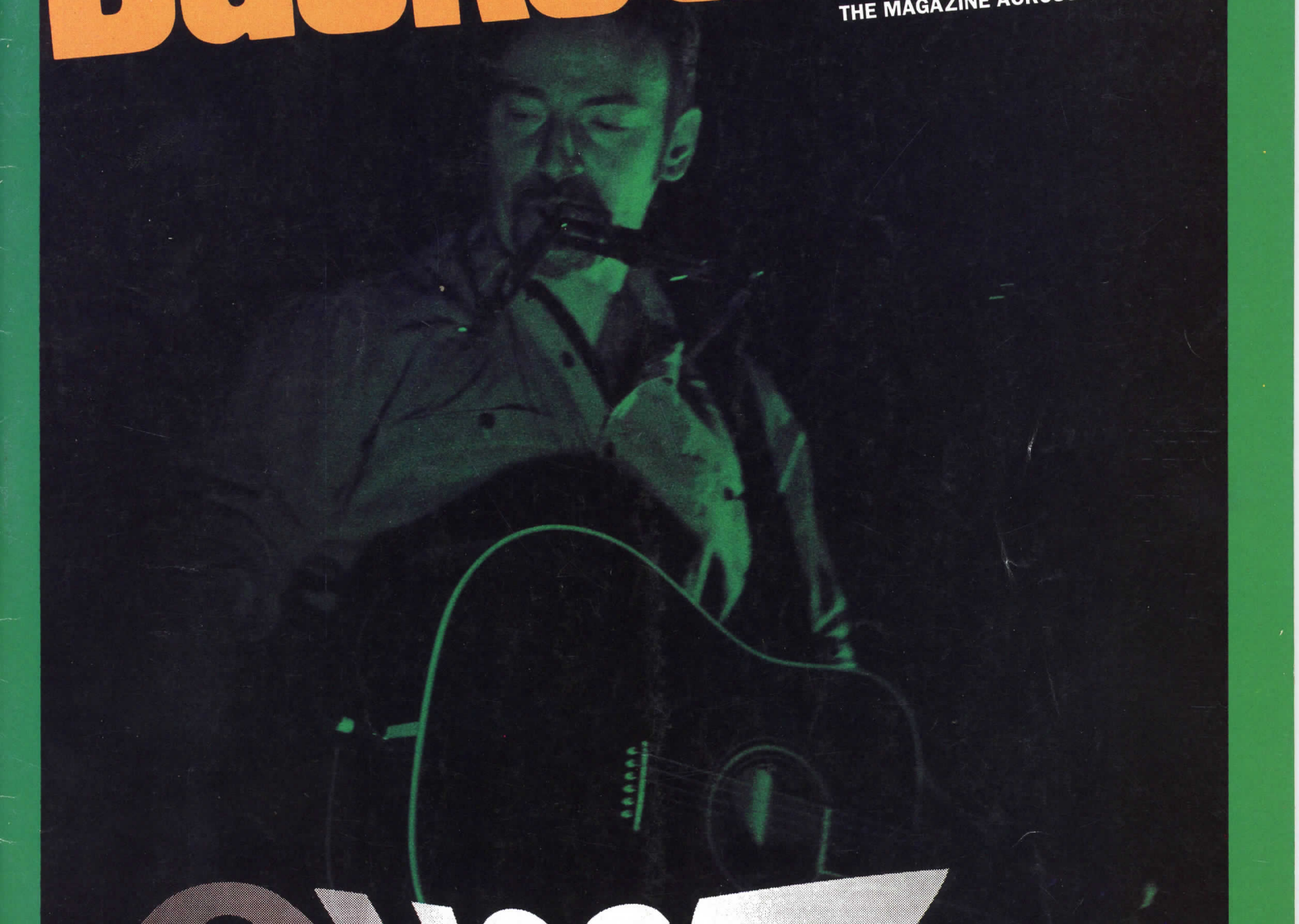

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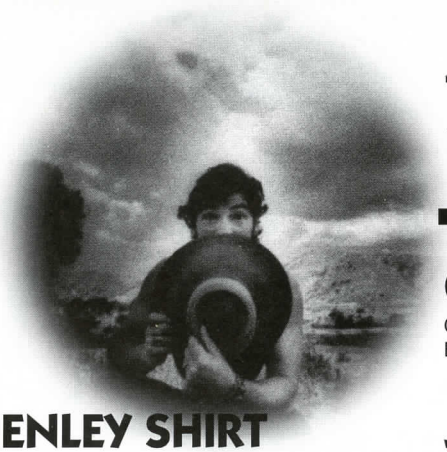

the ghost of tom joad

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Official *Ghost of Tom Joad* tour merchandise is now in stock! The following items are now available from Backstreet Records, all official items sold on Springsteen's current solo acoustic tour.

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A brown longsleeve henley shirt with three buttons, with "Bruce Springsteen: Ghost of Tom Joad" embroidery on the left front chest. Available in L and XL..... $30

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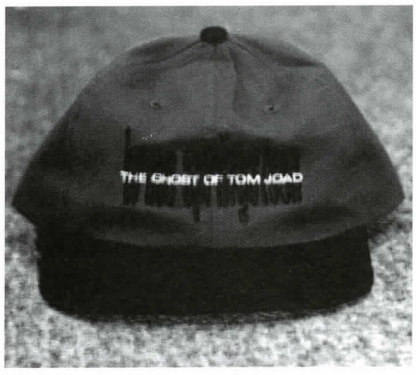
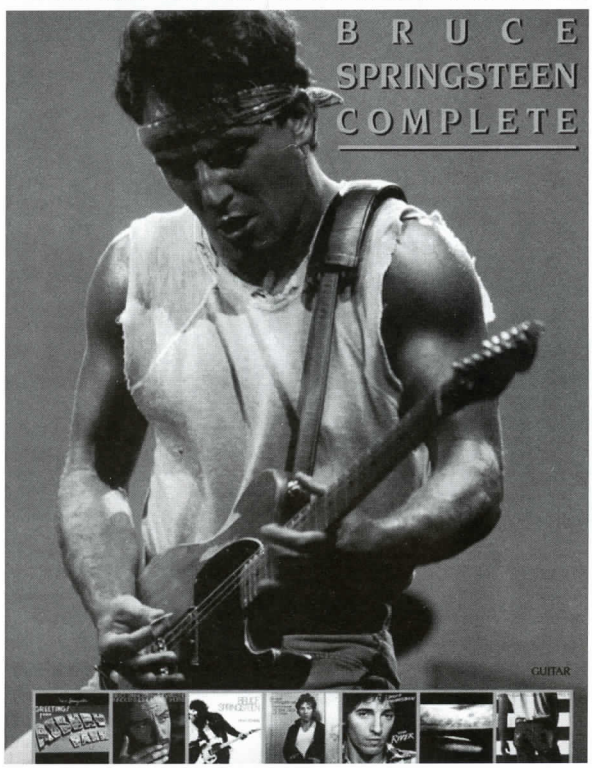
A two-toned baseball cap, olive green top with a black brim, with nice "Bruce Springsteen: Ghost of Tom Joad" embroidery.....$16



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN SONGBOOKS



•BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN COMPLETE Finally back in print! Covering material through *BUSA*, *Complete* really lives up to its name. This 236 -page book contains music and lyrics for every song from Bruce's first seven albums plus 17 more b-sides and songs recorded by other artists. "Be True," "The Fever," "From Small Things," "Pink Cadillac," "Protection"—it's all here! Plus 7 pages of glossy color photos, and index of first lines. This is the guitar version (the piano version is still out of print).....$25

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•COMING SOON: THE GHOST OF TOM JOAD We'll be carrying Springsteen's new songbook, due to be published shortly, and are taking pre-orders now!.....$22

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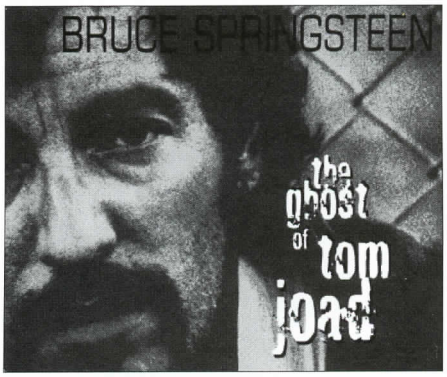

Just released in Europe, the first CD single from Springsteen's new album is for the title track. Includes three non-LP b-sides, taken from the Columbia Radio Hour broadcast of the Decmber Philly show: "Straight Time," "Sinaloa Cowboys," and "Darkness on the Edge of Town"—all, of course, solo acoustic. In jewelbox with pic sleeve.....$12

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DAVID DUBOIS PHOTO

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Backstreets

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Editor
Charles R. Cross

Managing Editor
Christopher Phillips

Associate Editors
Erik Flannigan, Jonathan B. Pont, Robert Santelli

Contributors
Rich Breton, David DuBois, Lynn Elder, Jared Houser, Josh Jacobson, Phil and Steve Jump, Bob Makin, Jeff McDermott, Jon Phillips, Lisa Pritchard, Jim Ragsdale, Bernie Ranellone, Debra L. Rothenberg, Arlen Schumer, Mary Schuh, James Shive, Billy Smith, Mark Stricherz, Marty Venturo, Bob Zimmerman, and many others whose help is essential.

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11/30/95 Berkeley, CA
David DuBois Photo

OFF THE WALL

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
11/22/95 Red Bank, NJ
Frank DiStasi Photo

LETTERS

I'VE SEEN ENOUGH

Dear Editor:

My brother and I were fortunate enough to get tickets for both of Bruce's shows in Cleveland. We made the six-hour trek and were not disappointed; both shows were superb. There was one event, though, that really put Bruce and his music into a new perspective for me.

We decided to hang around the stage door after the shows in the hope that Bruce might stop to say hello. After waiting for about an hour on Tuesday night, a garage door opened, a car pulled out, and Bruce was gone.

Things went a little better Wednesday night. Again, after about an hour, a hall security person came out and stated that Bruce would be coming out and that we needed to line up against the wall of the building. Sean and I ended up about two-thirds of the way back, but we weren't concerned. We figured that Bruce would wait and meet everyone (about 60 persons). As it turns out we got to about seventh or eighth in line when Bruce said he had to get going. We had come so close.

Needless to say, we were a little dejected. On the walk back to the hotel, though, it all hit home for me. Bruce did not have to come out for those 15 or 20 minutes, but he did. Not many of us like to be delayed when leaving work, and I'm sure that Bruce could and would feel the same way. In the end, Sean and I were happy that we just got to see Bruce, even if we didn't actually meet him. There were a few who were somewhat surprised that Bruce left without meeting everyone. In fact, I heard a few "I can't believe it"s.

I have believed this for a long time, but this experience makes it all the more meaningful for me: *Bruce Springsteen does not owe us anything*, but to give us his best work on his records and in performance. Too many times have I read complaints in this magazine about how Bruce should have put this on the record or he should have sung that in concert. The fact of the matter is that we all freely choose to listen to Bruce's music and we can just as freely choose not to listen to it. There is nothing wrong with discussing amongst ourselves in these pages what we think about any given topic. But it should never, ever be about what Bruce should or shouldn't do for us.

Bruce Springsteen is an artist. We enjoy what he creates and allow it to have meaning, relevance and importance in our lives. It's as simple as that. Bruce owes us nothing because he has given us so much already.

Patrick Curry
Ashley, PA

THE FEVER

Dear Editor:

I was one of several people whose seats were upgraded at the 12/8/95 show. I expected to sit in the balcony and I ended up in the second row (thanks, Bruce, Sony Music or whoever was involved with that).

One comment, though: Bruce said something that really offended me when he introduced "Across the Border," my favorite song on the new album. He discussed how the song was inspired by a scene in the film *The Grapes of Wrath* where Tom Joad says something very wrong. Bruce seemed to agree with Joad's (Steinbeck's) words. They were something like, "Maybe we don't have individual souls; maybe there's one *big soul* that we're all a part of."

This is so ridiculous; this kind of idea is the most dangerous in history. Every person is an individual and has a soul (conscience) that they determine by their thoughts and ideas; there is no "big soul." Stalin and Hitler didn't believe people had "individual souls" either, so they killed millions of people (they were all part of the "big soul," get it? Individuals, according to them, don't exist).

Earlier, Bruce said that "Murder Incorporated" was a response to the fact that the government and others decided that certain people's lives were expendable, "just the price of doing business." If he really meant that (and I hope he does), he couldn't have meant the other comment of Joad's/Steinbeck's; he couldn't really understand it, anyway.

To further understand my views on individualism and why I think Bruce's comment was seriously wrong, see the writings of Ayn Rand—a writer far superior to Steinbeck. As Rand would have said: "Check your premises, Bruce." What happened to the guy who wrote "Born to Run," "Thunder Road," and "Badlands"?

Jeff Falk
Yardley, PA

FOLLOW THAT DREAM

Dear Editor:

Your continuing fascination with my career is, I suppose, some form of compliment, even if you seem to take special glee in what you think is ridicule. Keep the plugs coming, gentlemen. In the meantime, let me correct your as usual risibly innaccurate [sic] reportage, particularly when it comes to me. To begin with, there was no "Kato/Eliot pairing." My book on the O.J. case (which, I'm sure you know but somehow failed to mention in your dismissal of it, spent two months on the New York Times best-seller list) was based on interviews I conducted with him that were subsequently subpoenaed by the D.A. and used as part of the case. I was subpoenaed, and published what I knew as a way of trying to serve justice. Kato had nothing to do with the publication of the book and received no money for or from it. All of this may be laughable to you, but there is such a redolent odor of envy about your sniffing down at *The Whole Truth*.

As for my "Hee-Haw" collaboration with the show's producer, Sam Lovullo, who was with it for 25 years, it is another book you seem to dismiss with immature finger-pointing giggles. Anyone interested in music who isn't saddled with the kind of faux-elitist, provincial social and cultural myopia as you fellows would know that "Hee-Haw" was one of the most important instruments in the development and promotion of not only country music, but Nashville as that music's center as well. Everyone in the business, outside the offices of *Backstreets*, that is, holds enormous respect for that show, which represented an authentic style of country humor, and perhaps more importantly, provided a crucial, and at the time unique outlet for country music on national TV. If rubes like you continue to laugh at country and anything to do with it—fine. However, in between guffaws, why not take a look at the same page your latest attack on me came, and you'll see that Springsteen's jukebox that night in New Jersey held the likes of George Jones, Bob Wills, Chuck Berry, the Louvin Brothers, Jerry Lee Lewis, the Everly Brothers, Speedy West and Jimmy Bryant, and Elvis, all of whom, with the exception of Chuck Berry and Elvis (who very much wanted to but was prevented by the Colonel) appeared on "Hee-Haw."

Get a life.

Marc Eliot
Los Angeles, CA

REASON TO BELIEVE

Dear Editor:

After reading "The Fire We Was Born In" from the latest *Backstreets*, I feel compelled to respond.

I receive another "fanzine" which doesn't hold a candle to yours. However, that artist works with the fan club regarding ticket sales. He does not sign contracts with venues unless there are 200 seats in the first 20 rows reserved for fan club members. We can buy two per show with identification on a separate sale date. This is fair and I've rarely heard complaints. We can even fax in requests! This artist remembers his fans at each and every show.

They are a lot like Bruce's fans in that they are with him 100 percent, not just for the song-of-the-month (or year).

Bruce's music has meant a great deal to me since 1976 when my best friend said, "Roll down the window and let the wind blow back your hair" in an effort to help me get through a very tough time in my life. My friend died two years later, but he lives on for me in Bruce's music. He was probably Bruce's biggest fan in upstate New York in 1976 and '77. We listened to hours and hours of reel to reel concert bootlegs. He also took me to my first concert at the Syracuse War Memorial in 1976.

Now every time Bruce releases something new or I'm lucky enough to see Bruce in concert I have happy memories of a very dear friend.

So, for obvious reasons, I became very excited about this

solo tour. I begged about 15 non-fans to call for tickets to Philly, Boston, and New York. It never occurred to me that we wouldn't even land one ticket. What a let-down! That very afternoon, however, scalpers had plenty of $30 tickets for $150 apiece. I actually considered spending my family's grocery money for one ticket! But I didn't know anyone else crazy enough to go with me. Although, this was probably the only opportunity I'll ever have to see and hear Bruce up close at a small venue.

It seems that the ticket distribution system represents everything Bruce is (used to be?) against. He is being exploited by scalpers who are the only ones profiting. Bruce's long-time fans deserve better than settling for seeing him next time.

Paulette Walley
Niskayuna, NY

FROM SMALL THINGS

Dear Editor:

December 3, 1995 will go down as one of the greatest nights of my life. My wife and I had last-row tickets on the floor of the Rosemont Theater. As we were waiting for the show to start, a crew member came walking up our center aisle. Then he walked down our row. My heart started to race. Then he sat down next to me and said he had two tickets down front if we wanted them; they weren't together but we could have them if we gave him our stubs. Since I was in shock and couldn't speak, my wife said we'd take them.

Unreal. My wife sat in the front row, right side, and I sat in the second row—dead center! I was shaking like a leaf. After reading about ticket upgrades for years in *Backstreets*, it finally happened to me. It was a dream come true.

And then there was the show. Powerful stuff. Getting to see Bruce up close in such an intimate setting, performing songs that obviously mean so much to him was a tremendously moving experience.

Bruce was even gracious enough to stick around in the cold Chicago air and shake hands with everyone who waited around after the show—including me! Bruce made some funny comments like, "Thanks for coming to the wedding" as he made his way down the "receiving line." It was, without question, a magical night and one I won't ever forget.

Kirk J. Marley
Indianapolis, IN

HERE IN YOUNGSTOWN

Dear Editor:

I have been a lifelong resident of the Youngstown-Warren, Ohio, area, and most of my relatives have or had worked in the mills here. My father was one of the first to lose his job when his plant shut down in 1973; he was at least "fortunate" enough to have qualified for a small pension, and he was able to retire on a disability. Many others weren't so fortunate. One of my cousins lost his job this summer when his plant shut down after a strike at the facility; he has a wife and two young kids to support.

While I never worked in the mills myself, I saw the effects. My father would come home dirty and dog-tired from working under hellish conditions. But somehow he always managed to find the time to have a game of catch with me. After years of slaving there, his body crippled up so badly with arthritis that he could barely hold a cup of coffee or get out of his chair. He died in January of 1994.

Youngstown the city and "Youngstown" the song mean a lot to me, and indeed to all of the people here. While I would like to call the song a paean to the steelworkers, that word is not quite appropriate, as it is not a joyful song; the word dirge comes to mind, but that also doesn't describe it. Our will is bent but not broken. Youngstown has been declared to be dying for years, but it still survives, as do we.

George B. Sofranko, Jr.
Canfield, OH

DOWN HERE BELOW

Dear Editor:

In his review of *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, Charles Cross remarks that "the forgotten and downtrodden are most likely illegal immigrants, left out of a social welfare system because of the happenstance of their birthplace." While illegal aliens do

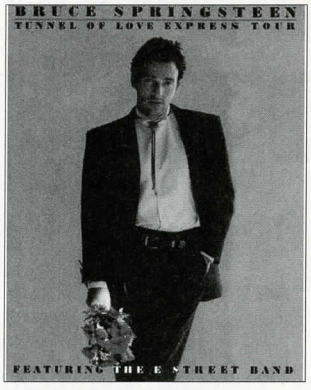
Continued page 34

ORIGINAL SPRINGSTEEN TOURBOOKS

These officially licensed tourbooks are out of print and have been unavailable anywhere since they were sold exclusively at concerts. Essential items and great gifts for any Bruce fan!

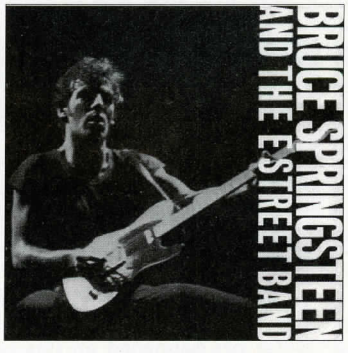
This 32-page color program features stunning color photos of Bruce on-stage and off, taken by Neal Preston, Annie Leibovitz, and others. Profiles on each of the new band members. Glossy covers, matte pages. A gorgeous edition.

WORLD TOUR '92-93 • $15



This lavish, oversized tourbook sold on the *Tunnel* tour contains dozens of striking color photos of Springsteen and the band, along with the lyrics to the LP (including "Roulette") and Bill Barol's excellent feature on *Tunnel* from *Newsweek*, 11/2/87.

TUNNEL OF LOVE • $15



The original tourbook sold on the 1980-81 tour, 32 pages of outstanding photos of Springsteen and the band, including outtake shots from *The River* cover sessions. Many unique live shots from '78, too. Limited, a small amount back in stock!

THE RIVER • $20

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A solo tour brings out community

This Land Is Your Land

By Erik Flannigan

It's a great time to be a Springsteen fan, again. The release of *The Ghost of Tom Joad* and the accompanying tour have brought welcome changes to what it means to be a Bruce fan. Some have been subtle, others overt, and there's been an interesting and largely unreported change in Bruce himself which has greatly affected his connection to his audience. In many ways, even though Bruce continues to move forward as an artist, it is a return to the past.

I became a fan in 1979, when Springsteen was still something of a cult artist. It was a time when being a Bruce fan was like being a member of a secret club; not everyone knew him or his music, but when you met someone who did, a knowing exchange would always ensue. There was something special about connecting to those who "got it," an *esprit de corps* that has returned with *The Ghost of Tom Joad*.

With this album, those who concern themselves with chart positions, ticket sales, and other measures of Bruce's mainstream commercial appeal have not had much to talk about. Bruce's relative popularity is not a particularly relevant issue anymore, nor should it be. The active Bruce community has gone back to the music. We've collectively sunk our teeth deep into *Joad* and remained hungry for insight. How else to explain the effort to create a glossary of the uncommon words and places Springsteen invokes on the album? Or the free exchange of ticket information on the Internet, through *Backstreets*, and elsewhere?

We're taking care of our own—the "us and them" mentality has returned for the 1995-96 tour. I can remember meeting people in 1980 who had been converted by *The River* or had heard so much about the live show, and they were dying to get to a concert. Yet time and time again, these people would tell me, "I can't figure out how to get tickets." If you wanted Springsteen tickets in most cities in 1980, you did have to be in the know. And it's for that reason that many of us, myself included, were invited to our first Springsteen show by somebody who was already a fan. The club was free to join, but it seemed you had to have a sponsor.

With Bruce's welcome return to small halls for this tour, the situation is much the same. For who but an insider is aware of the ticket dump or the back-row upgrade? And many of us are pulling friends into the fold, sponsoring new fans again to experience these special shows.

A friend of mine also noticed the "us and them" mentality, and his fear is that it is breeding elitism. Maybe so, but I'd rather hear elitist Bruce fans tell some moron at the Beacon to quit yapping, than allow his inane babbling to spoil the show for others and maybe even the performer. I mean, how hard is it to keep your mouth shut for a couple hours of a show you presumably went to a great deal of effort to see? These are not arena shows. There is no nacho stand in the lobby to appease these people. It's all about what's happening on stage, not in the crowd.

What I want all Bruce fans to realize is that these are special shows. A solo acoustic Springsteen tour is something I've dreamed of almost since I became a fan. But beyond the music and the setting, something else has happened on this tour: Bruce Springsteen as storyteller has returned.

It's easy to forget that throughout the '70s, the tales Springsteen spun in his concerts were as much a part of his reputation as a great live performer as his music. From the hilarious Ducky Slattery to the heartbreaking couple next door who inspired "Spare Parts," Springsteen's stories have served as an intimate and unique communication with his audience.

Bruce's storytelling evolved over the years, and the more rehearsed those stories became, the less the immediacy of the connection. On the *Tunnel* tour in 1988, the stories were like scenes from a play. Every night of the U.S. tour, Bruce and Clarence would sit on the park bench before "All That Heaven Will Allow" and reminisce about the old days. But a few minor variants aside, the stories they told remained intact across the tour.

By the 1992-93 tour, Springsteen was virtually mute. Storytelling had essentially evaporated from the show, and he let the music do the talking. His connection to the audience suffered without that intimate expression, and something that had been so integral to Springsteen's persona seemed extinguished.

But as evidenced by 1990's Christic benefit concerts, the solo acoustic setting puts Springsteen at his most confessional. More stories have flowed on this tour than the last three combined. And in his tales, Bruce has shared a great deal of himself—his thoughts, his fears, his questions. His vulnerabilities are back on stage as they once were, and because we've embraced the music and the message, that intimate communication has been restored. For Springsteen, like all of us, speaks freely when he knows he's among friends.

The ultimate irony may be that by putting out an album filled with songs of isolation and despair—one that will never come close to the sales of *Born in the USA*—Bruce Springsteen has moved back into a community of friends. Welcome home.

* * *

BUSINESS STUFF: We appreciate the great response we got to our 15th Year Anniversary issue (#50/51), all the kind letters, e-mails, and phone calls. If you missed this special issue, the biggest *Backstreets* ever, a limited number of copies are still available by mail.

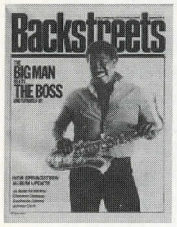
Because our last one was a double issue, many of you might find that your subscription is expiring this time. If your mailing label says "X52" on it, or if it says "renew now," your current subscription has expired. If your label says "X53," you have only one issue to go, so renew now to avoid interrupted service.

The biggest news of change with this issue is that the *Backstreets* Boss Hotline number will change on May 1st. The Boss Hotline is a subscriber-only phone information line with all the current Bruce news. It's updated at least weekly—more often when there's breaking news. The number is unlisted and only given out to current subscribers. However, over the past year, more and more non-subscribers, or expired subscribers, have been calling, and the lines have been jammed. To help make the Hotline easier for subscribers to reach, we change the number every so often. Please, please do not give the new number to friends, relatives, radio stations, etc. so as to keep the phone traffic down. SuperSubs have their own Hotline number, which is much easier to reach, but that number too is changing.

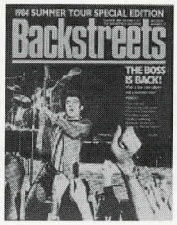
The current Hotline number always comes with the issue of *Backstreets* that subscribers get in the mail, either printed on the sheet inside the polybag or stamped on the mailing envelope (the number is not listed on newsstand copies, which is a good reason to consider subscribing).

The new number goes into effect right away, and both numbers will continue to work until May 1—the old number will be discontinued as of that date. So reprogram your phones—over the years we've heard hundreds of comments from subscribers that the Hotline has helped them get tickets before anyone else, so you never know when it might be a lifesaver. We hope the new numbers make the line easier for subscribers to use, and thanks for your patience.

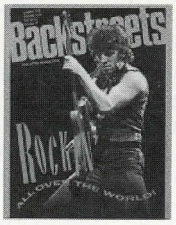
Backstreets Backissues



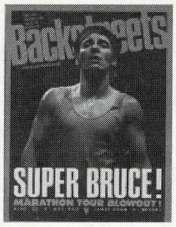
#8 Clarence int.; German discog.; new import singles.....$8



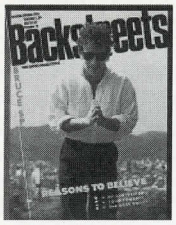
#10 Tour '84 Special: *BUSA* review; Japanese discog.....$5



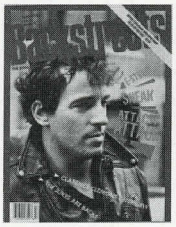
#14 Rockin' the world: tour update; Boss club; REM int..$5



#15 Super Bruce!: '85 tour; Sun City; Mad Dog int.; U2.....$5



#16 Bruce's political message; Nils; John Fogerty.....$5



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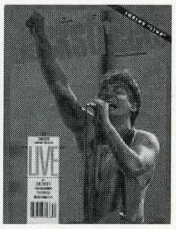
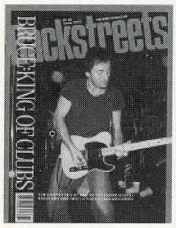
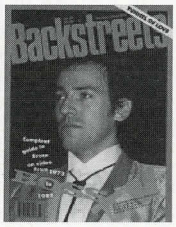


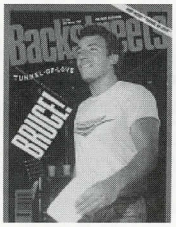
#20 Listener's guide to *Live*; Bruce speaks; sessions.....$5



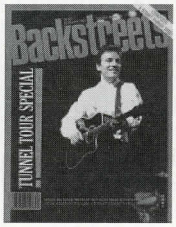
#21 King of Clubs: Shore music; Steve int.; Landau int.....$5



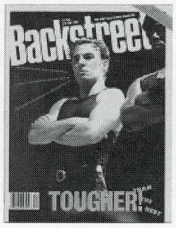
#22 Guide to Boss video; Bruce's Fender; The Upstage....$5



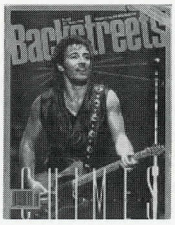
#23 *Tunnel of Love* reviews; Stone Pony; John Hammond.....$5



#25 U.S. *Tunnel* tour info; E St. Family Tree; Asbury Park....$5



#26 Complete European tour set lists/reviews; Freehold.....$5



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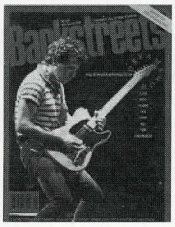

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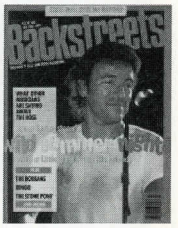

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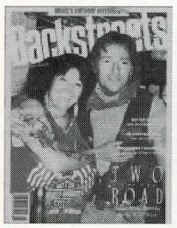

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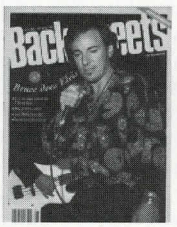

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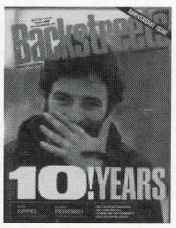

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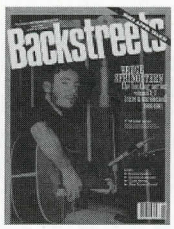

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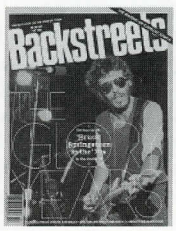

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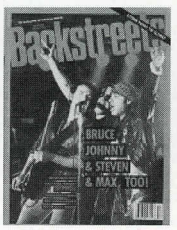

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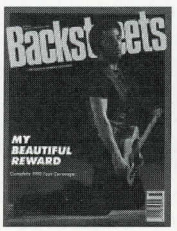

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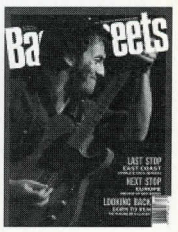

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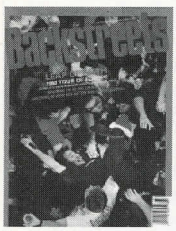

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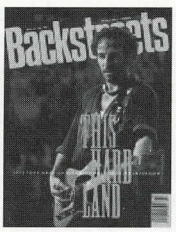

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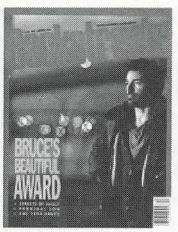

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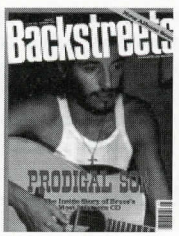

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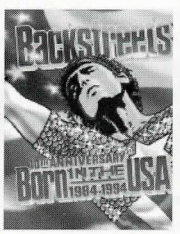

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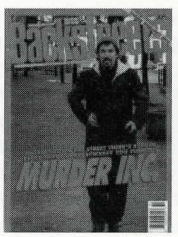

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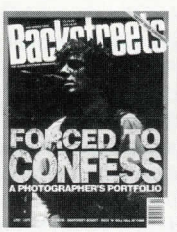

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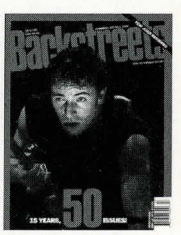

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About *Backstreets* Magazine

Backstreets is a quarterly magazine that covers the music of Bruce Springsteen and other Jersey Shore performers. The magazine began in 1980 and over the years has covered Bruce Springsteen's recordings and performances more extensively than any other publication in the world.

Backstreets appears generally every three or four months, though the actual publication date is affected by breaking news, tour coverage and the occasional special issue. Each issue of the magazine is progressively numbered. Subscribers can tell the expiration date of their current subscription by looking at the number that appears above their name on their mailing label. If that number (it follows an "X") is the same number as the latest issue, your subscription has expired. Unlike most larger, consumer magazines, *Backstreets* does not have the resources to continually bombard subscribers with renewal mailings, so subscribers need to take note of their expiration date. Since *Backstreets* carries very little paid advertising, subscription revenue is the only real support the magazine has—so by subscribing or renewing you are helping us with this admittedly modest effort.

Backstreets is available on a limited number of select newstands around the world, though newsstand availability is not something you can count on in most areas. If you're interested in the magazine, we highly recommend that you consider subscribing since subscribers are offered numerous benefits (see Hotline section below) in addition to the convenience of getting the magazine as soon as it comes off the press and at a discount from the cover price.

Stores interested in carrying *Backstreets* can contact our office: though the magazine's audience is select, the sell through percentage is extremely high and the magazine is offered to distributors on a guaranteed full-return basis. *Backstreets* is also handled by a number of independent distributors including Ingram, IPD, and Caroline.

Current subscription rates for *Backstreets* are $18 a year in the US and Canada (all prices are in US dollars); $30 for two years; and $40 for three years (a savings of $14). Rates for overseas subscriptions are $25 per year (again in US funds), or $42 for a two-year subscription. You can subscribe or renew your current subscription by writing to Subscriber Services, Backstreets, PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115. If you have a credit card, you can FAX your order to us at (206) 728-8827. If you'd like to charge a subscription and don't have a FAX, you can call our office at (206) 728-7603. Our e-mail address for orders and subscriptions is joeroberts@aol.com. Our office is open Monday thru Friday, from 9:30 a.m. until 5 p.m., Pacific Time. Our phones are for orders and subscriptions only: obviously we can't be working if we're answering questions about album releases or ticket sales. Please call our Hotline to be updated on all the latest news.

The Backstreets Hotline

To keep our subscribers updated with the current information between issues, *Backstreets* provides a 24 hours-a-day information phone message, called the Backstreets Boss Hotline. The Hotline is updated at least every week (usually on Monday evening) and contains all the latest available information on album releases, tour dates, and appearances. There is no charge at present for the Hotline, though callers will pay the normal long distance charges to access the line. The line gets thousands of calls each week so calling at off hours is the best way to access it.

The phone number to the Backstreets Hotline is unlisted and unpublished since, due to the high volume of calls, the service can only be provided to current subscribers of the magazine. To assure that the service is only made available to subscribers, the number to the Hotline is printed on the mailing sheet that goes to subscribers with each issue. We do change the number frequently to ensure that the service is only accessible by those who are current subscribers (the number occasionally gets passed around by fans and even has been announced on the radio which causes the lines to be overloaded with non-subscribers who don't help support the service). If you're unsure of the present number for the Hotline and you are a current subscriber you can write us with a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE), and we will send it to you.

SuperSubs

Partially because of the demands of the Hotline, *Backstreets* also has a SuperSub program for those hardcore fan who also serve as the supporting members of our magazine. SuperSubs get an entire package of subscriber services in addition to their normal subscription and access to a special SuperSub-only Hotline number. SuperSub benefits include getting the magazine sent first class, a first class subscription to all Backstreet Records catalogs and hotsheets, a special edition SuperSub t-shirt, and a free classified ad in each issue of the magazine. SuperSubs are now available for overseas fans, including airmail service. For more information on the Backstreets SuperSub, please see the ad on page 33.

Love letters, hate mail, etc.

Backstreets is very much a forum for the ideas and input of the many subscribers who contribute to the effort each issue. Letters to the editor are always welcome. We read them all and publish as many as space permits. Clips and xeroxes of news items sent in by readers are essential in helping us keep the magazine and hotline informative. Due to the number of inquiries we receive, we cannot always answer every letter, but we do respond to all who send a self-addressed stamped envelope with their inquiry.

Backissues and past glories

Backstreets is the longest running Springsteen fanzine, and the total number of pages we've published over the years represents the single largest chunk of Bruce Springsteen information ever compiled under one roof. Though many of the earliest issues are sold out and command high prices on the collector's market, a number of backissues are still available at reasonable prices until supplies are depleted. You'll find an order form in this issue of the issues still available or you can always call our office.

In late 1989 a collection of some of the best articles from the magazine was published in the hardback book *Backstreets, Springsteen: The Man and His Music* from Harmony Books. This 224-page book collects some of the best from past issues of *Backstreets* and adds an extensive discography and a complete listing of all concerts Bruce Springsteen has ever performed. The book contains over 150 photographs of Springsteen, many in full color, and most never published before. *Record Collector* magazine described the book as "Wonderful, the best possible buy for the Springsteen convert," while the *Asbury Park Press* called the selection of photos "brilliant." A completely revised and updated second edition paperback was released in 1992. The books are available in finer bookstores or by calling Backstreets Orderline at (206) 728-7603.

Backstreet Records Catalog

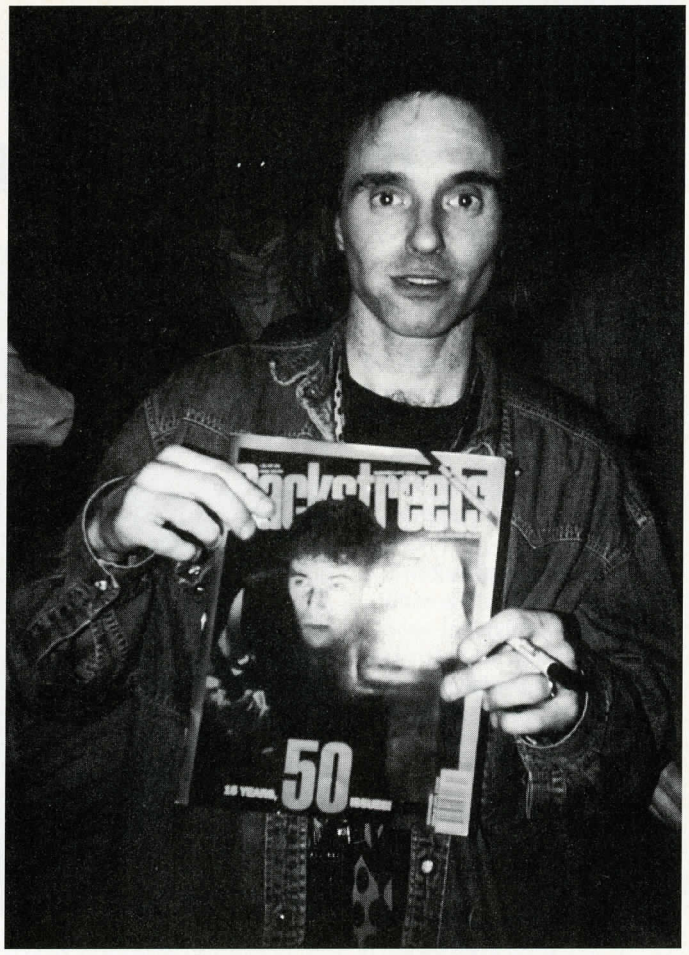
Backstreets also has a separate division called Backstreet Records that publishes a mail-order catalog of official and authorized Bruce Springsteen merchandise. Backstreet Records carries numerous books and fanzines about Bruce Springsteen and other related artists. Yearly subscriptions to the catalog (five issues) are $5 in the U.S. and Canada, $8 overseas.

ON LIPS

ALL THE MOVIES: California has provided Bruce with rich ground lately, and he continues to hit paydirt in Hollywood. Springsteen's "Missing" from *The Crossing Guard* may have suffered the same fate as the movie it came from, coming and going without as much attention as it deserved (not to mention a soundtrack release). But as they say, two out of three ain't bad: two years after "Streets of Philadelphia" took both the Golden Globe and the Oscar, "Dead Man Walkin'" has Bruce back in the running for the "Best Song" Academy Award. Springsteen's second Oscar nomination comes at an inopportune time, however. In order to perform the song at the ceremony on March 25, Springsteen has had to reschedule no less than five European shows. . . . One awards show that didn't have Bruce changing his itinerary was the recent Blockbuster Entertainment Awards, where he was nominated in the "Favorite Rock Male" category along with Jon Bon Jovi and Jimmy Buffett.

BLOOD BROTHERS: Ever since their studio reunion more than a year ago, E Street Band rumors have been going around non-stop. The current word has Springsteen returning to the States after his solo shows to take the E Street Band—depending on which version you hear—into the studio or on the road. According to Ticketmaster's online Tip Sheet, "Industry insiders insist that Springsteen is committed to doing a summer stadium tour with the E Street Band. You read it here first." And you read it here second, this time with a big grain of salt in the form of a quote from Neil Strauss in the March 7 *New York Times*: "This summer's pop-music concert season is shaping up to be one of waiting for next season. Though music fans were hoping for big tours by...Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, these have been pushed back until at least 1997."... In the meantime, the E Streeters seem to be keeping themselves busy, as usual. Clarence Clemons is getting back to rock 'n' roll with an album titled *Get It On* due out shortly. The record is a collaboration with a singer named Aja; Clarence described it in *Profiles* magazine as "an Ike and Tina Turner of the '90s.". . . The Big Man also joins David Sancious and other guests appearing on Italian superstar Zucchero's new album, *Spirito DiVino*, released in the U.S. earlier this year. . . . Look for Roy Bittan on Lou Reed's new album, *Set the Twilight Reeling*, contributing piano to "Finish Line.". . . In late 1995 Max Weinberg was the keynote speaker at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, on hand for a teachers conference on "Rock and Roll in the Contemporary Classroom." The conference was led by the Hall's Director of Education, Robert Santelli, and it sounds like it was a great success. . . . Nils Lofgren has been busy touring the U.S. in support of his new album, *Damaged Goods*, including a stop at the Backstage in Seattle, attended by the *Backstreets* staff and Neil Young. . . . Speaking of Neil, Sony's Daily Dish, the label's internet mailing list, reported that Young's Bridge School Benefits—including Springsteen's performances—will be the subject of a planned CD-ROM title. . . . Look for Tommy Sims on a new project called *The Players*. The album is a compilation of nine top studio musicians each playing one of their own compositions and collaborating on the album's opener, "10Q," co-written by Sims.

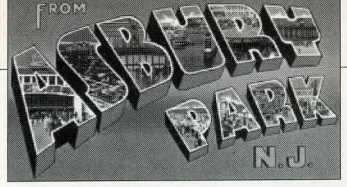
ON THE SHELF: The premiere issue of *Live* magazine, a new entertainment magazine from Ticketmaster, featured Springsteen on the cover. No tips for beating the scalpers (or the service charges), but a good story on the new tour by Steve Pond. . . . Also look for Bruce on the cover of the March 9 *NME* for a fantastic interview, and a shorter interview in the March/April issue of *Mother Jones*. . . . The *Village Voice*'s annual "Pazz & Jop" Critics' Poll ranked the best albums of 1995, with *The Ghost of Tom Joad* landing at a very respectable number eight. . . . *MOJO*, the UK music mag, recently had their readers rank the top 100 albums ever made and Bruce came in with *Darkness* at #71, *Tunnel* at #66 and *BTR* at #31. Isn't this the same country where "Born to Run" was voted the number one song of all time? . . . Check out the March issue of *Teamster*, with a cover story on Springsteen's support of the striking newspaper workers in Detroit. As the article points out, "For once, the boss is on the side of working people.". . . In a decision that probably wasn't hard to make, Springsteen made his first direct donation to the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame and Museum: the giant U.S. flag from the *BUSA* tour. . . . Bruce wound up making an inadvertent (but hefty) donation when his expired AmEx card was brought back to him at an L.A. restaurant. According to the *New York Daily News*, Bruce handed over his new card and said to keep the old one—which later sold for $4,500 at a New York memorabilia store.



HARRY BLAISURE/GREG O'DELL PHOTO

Nils Lofgren and Backstreets *in a Wonderland.*

COVER ME: Emmylou Harris played "Mansion on the Hill" (written by "a local boy," she said) when she and Daniel Lanois played the Count Basie Theater in November. After the song she thanked Springsteen, who was in the crowd that night but did not, as rumors had suggested he might, join Emmylou onstage. Some Bruce fans got to catch Emmylou's set at the Bridge show last fall, and she's still on tour in support of the amazing *Wrecking Ball*. . . . Chris LeDoux, who covered "Tougher Than the Rest" on his 1994 album *Haywire*, also included a cover of "Cadillac Ranch" on his recent record, *Rodeo Rock and Roll Collection*. . . . Look for the Cowboy Junkies' *200 More Miles*, a 2CD set of live performances from their ten years together, which includes their performance of "State Trooper" from 1986. . . . Suzi Quatro's new greatest hits album will include her cover of "Born to Run.". . . Elliott Murphy's new CD, *Selling the Gold*, includes a duet with Bruce on "Everything I Do." A record store in France was giving away free with each Murphy disc a bonus CD5, on which Murphy plays acoustic versions of "Stolen Car" and "Drive All Night." C'est magnifique.



The Shore rings in the New Year

On the Boardwalk with Bruce

By Robert Makin

Bruce Springsteen recently granted a broadcast television interview, with Ed Bradley of "60 Minutes" joining him on a tour of the Asbury Park boardwalk. The Jersey Shore's favorite son pointed out such landmarks as the Stone Pony and Madame Marie's Temple of Knowledge, the booth of the fortune teller immortalized in the Springsteen classic "4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)."

In an exchange that apparently ended up on the editing room floor, Bradley asked if Springsteen had ever visited the gypsy.

"Sure," he said. "She told me I was going to be rich and famous... But she probably told that to all the guitar players."

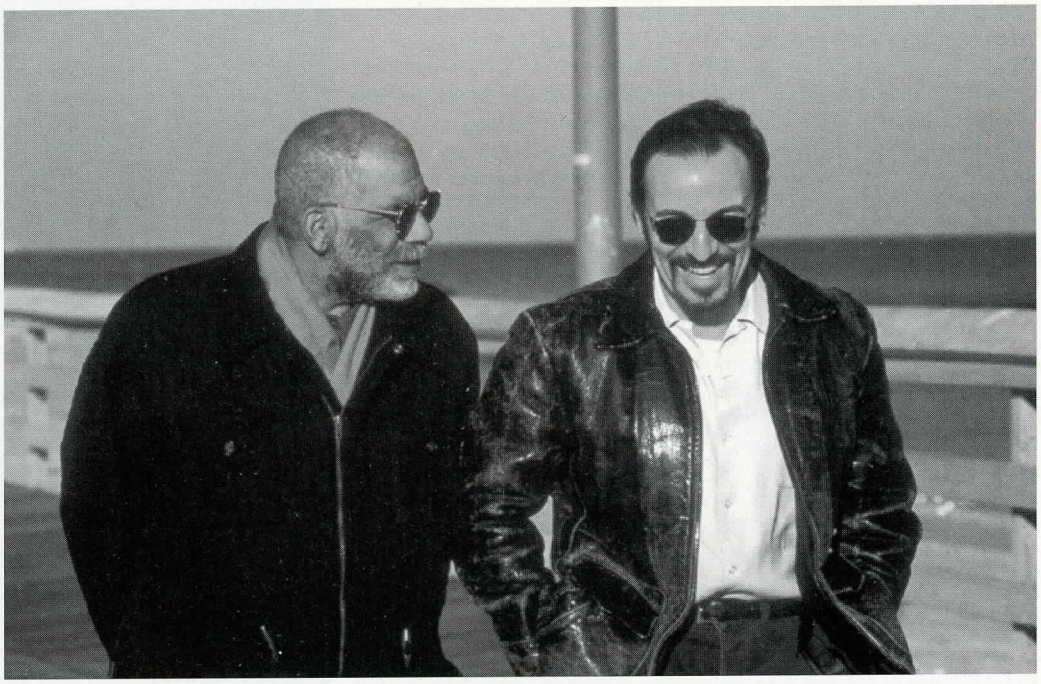
The whipping winter wind made the run-down resort look even more desolate. While the setting was somewhat bleak, it served as an excellent backdrop for Springsteen to expound upon his strongest societal statement to date, his new album, *The Ghost of Tom Joad*.

"Hard work can get you someplace," he explained. "And if you're one in a million, maybe, for whatever reasons, you fall into fortune...but to generalize that story is where things go wrong. Hard work is not enough.

"In America, the biggest story is always who's number one," Springsteen continued. "That's the American story. That's not the *real* American story—that's the story that's presented to you every day: 'Who is number one today?' In my story, I saw—in certain places—being turned into local boy makes good. This is the U.S.A. Anybody can do it. And that's not true."

Bradley conducted the interview around the beginning of Bruce's solo acoustic tour, which kicked off in late November with two Jersey dates.

The well-respected broadcast journalist says he was very impressed by Springsteen's ideals and values.



CRAIG BLANKENHORN/CBS NEWS PHOTO

"60 Minutes" correspondent Ed Bradley and Springsteen walk the boardwalk.

"When it comes to rock music," Bradley said, "I don't know who else has had the commercial success he has had and who then says, 'I'm going to put the band aside and instead of playing Madison Square Garden or the Meadowlands, I'm going to play the Beacon Theater. It'll be a small venue and it's just me and the guitar.' I think that's remarkable. You've got so many people who are in it to make as much money as they can. He's someone who goes beyond that."

Part of Bradley's interview with Bruce took place within the Stone Pony, one of the few sights left that recalls the sunny days of the sounds of Asbury Park.

While walking on the Asbury Park boardwalk, Bruce responded, "There's something about holding your kid's hand on a street where your father held your hand that's very resonant. I'm not sure what it is. But I realized I want my children to be world citizens and to be worldly, but I also want them to know where they came from, what came before them, have a sense of history as to who they are. For me, that's here."

Physically, the club scene may be in bad shape, but the sounds of Asbury Park were out in full-force this New Year's Eve. With a little help from its friends from Pennsylvania, classic bar band rock 'n' soul turned the Jersey Shore into a blue-collar bopfest.

Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes played their third annual New Year's Eve Bash at the Count Basie. Pittsburgh favorite Norman Nardini, who is in the studio working on his fourth album for Circumstantial Records, opened the show.

Another Steeltown fave, Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers, closed out the year with a weekend stand at the Metro. Philly roots rockers Tommy Conwell & the Little Kings and the E Street-sounding Joe D'Urso & Stone Caravan were among the support acts.

Later that evening, Nardini ripped it up with Jukes guitarist Bobby Bandiera at the Metro in Long Branch. Bandiera is also working on a new album. His second indie offering, due sometime this year, will include the longtime live nuggets "Pauline" and "Goodbye Blues," as well as such new tunes as "A Love So Fine," "Rescue Me," "Sleeping Beauty," and "I'll Be Alright."

Bandiera has also contributed "Sure Know Somethin'" to *Dressed to Kill*, an independently-produced collection of Kiss covers. Bobby, a closet Kiss fan as well as a longtime friend and gig-mate of *Dressed to Kill* co-organizer Hal Selzer, really does a bang-up job. Contact Rock Dream Records at (609) 890-0202 to obtain a copy of the disc, which also includes Selzer's on-again, off-again project Adrian Dodz.

SOAP, the Asbury Park-based Society of Associated Performers, have been makin' waves lately. The performance rights group recently raised funds for its proposed Youth Center, a life-long dream of Margaret Potter, the late co-founder of both SOAP and the Upstage.

SOAP also recently held benefits for a local leukemia patient, as well as the Cub Scouts. For more info, contact the non-profit organization at Box 355, Asbury Park, NJ 07712.

ON DISC

Japanese CDs do it right

"Ghost" only a promo in U.S.

Three months after the album, the first single from *The Ghost of Tom Joad* has been released. The LP's title track appears on a CD5 from several countries (though not the U.S.) along with three non-LP b-sides. The extra tracks are live acoustic performances taken from the Columbia Radio Hour's Tower Theater broadcast and include "Straight Time," "Sinaloa Cowboys," and "Darkness on the Edge of Town." At press time, a limited edition digi-pack CD5 with the same tracks was planned from the UK, along with a seven-inch picture disc.

While those three b-sides are currently the only tracks from the broadcast available on compact disc, the entire Columbia Radio Hour spotlight on Springsteen is available on promotional sets of two ten-inch reels or two cassettes. The broadcast consisted of two hour-long segments: an hour of live performance from the Tower Theater, and an interview with Bob Costas. Big spenders take note—the reels were recently advertised in *Goldmine* for $635 per set.

Getting back to "The Ghost of Tom Joad," the song has also appeared in several promotional configurations, most notably as a one-track CD5 with picture sleeve. The disc may be rarer than most promos since there wasn't heavy distribution to radio. Copies of the CD were originally handed out to concertgoers in New York City who brought a winter coat for the homeless to the December Beacon shows. Also issued from Columbia was an in-store promo disc in their *Play Hits and They Will Buy* series, a 14-song sampler featuring "The Ghost of Tom Joad."

"Dead Man Walkin'" is another Springsteen track that will be available as a promotional CD5, but reportedly it will not be released as a commercial single. The song was also included as part of a promotional package sent to Oscar voters for the Tim Robbins-directed motion picture. A nice collectible, it consists of a Columbia promotional cassette with four songs from the soundtrack, plus the complete *Dead Man Walking* movie on video, housed in a wooden box.

Now that the *Blood Brothers* documentary has officially seen the light of day, airing throughout March on the Disney Channel, fans are wondering if the new songs from the movie will be available on disc. Though video and laserdisc releases of *Blood Brothers* now seem likely, no soundtrack album is planned. For the time being, "Without You," "High Hopes," and "Back in Your Arms Again" join other "released" but unavailable-on-disc Springsteen tracks (such as "Missing" and the remaining Tower Theater-broadcast tracks) as possible b-side contenders.

In the meantime, Springsteen appears on several of another artist's b-sides—six of them, to be exact. Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers' "Labor of Love" is being released as a single in the UK, and the extra tracks are taken from the radio broadcast from Grushecky's Pittsburgh shows where Bruce was an "honorary Houserocker." Two different configurations of the single are planned, each with three different b-sides.

With the release of *The Ghost of Tom Joad* in Japan came a deluge of Japanese CDs that will interest serious and casual collectors alike. For the completist, compact discs from Springsteen's back catalog (from *Born to Run* through *Tunnel*) were reissued with better packaging, including an interesting feature: When placed together, the obis on the spines combine to form the cover image from *Born to Run*.

In addition to those regular reissues, limited edition CDs have been pressed in Japan for both *BTR* and *Born in the USA*. Utilizing the same "Super Bit Mapping"/20-bit mastering process as on the US *BTR* Mastersound, these CDs offer the best sound quality to date for these titles. Only *BUSA* is an improvement in sound over what was previously available, but both Japanese editions are distinguished from earlier releases by their remarkable packaging. Housed in a thick cardboard sleeve—5-¼" square, taller than standard CDs—each package resembles a miniature LP sleeve with great attention to detail, including a re-creation of the original art down to type on the spine. *BTR* even has a gatefold sleeve, with lyrics and photo printed inside. Each sleeve, along with an obi, then fits into a thick, clear plastic slipcase. Here's hoping that *Darkness* and the rest get similar treatment.

Sony Japan has released quite a few other titles of interest as the "Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band Series." The series includes CD reissues of John Eddie's self-titled album, several Grin and Southside Johnny albums, and Clarence Clemons's first three solo LPs. The best of this Bruce-related bunch is the reissue of a Southside album that was never commercially available. The *Jukes Live at the Bottom Line* album was originally sent to radio stations in the '70s, and the CD recreates the original "graphics"—a plain white sleeve with the title stamped in red—plus an obi. The album consists of ten live tracks from October of 1976, an amazing performance including guest Ronnie Spector, in stunning sound. Although some of these tracks have been on disc before (four of the ten were included on Epic/Legacy's *The Best of Southside Johnny* collection), this is the first time this entire album has appeared on CD.

In other Southside news, *The Jukes* album from 1979 has just been reissued on CD from Off-Beat/Polygram.

The double-disc set from last September's Concert for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, originally slated for last year, now has a release date of April 2 on Columbia.

the backstreets jukebox

1. Bruce Springsteen
"The Ghost of Tom Joad"
Columbia (CD5)

2. Bob Mould
Bob Mould
Rykodisc (advance CD)

3. Bruce Springsteen
Born in the USA
Sony Japan (Mastersound CD)

4. Alejandro Escovedo
With These Hands
Rykodisc (CD)

5. Maria McKee
Life Is Sweet
Geffen (CD)

6. Eric Matthews
It's Heavy in Here
Sub Pop (CD)

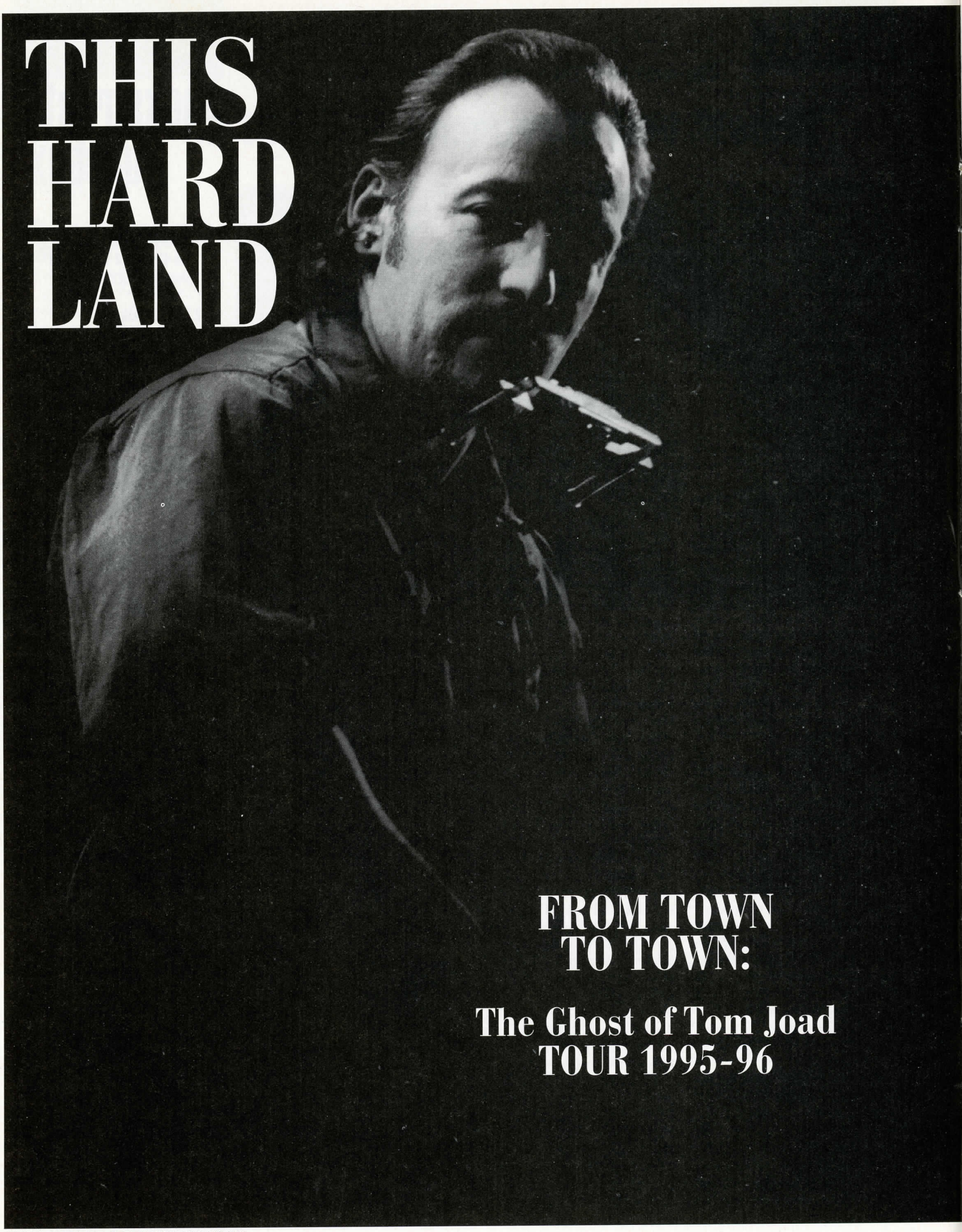
7. Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes
Jukes Live at the Bottom Line
Sony Japan (CD)

8. Archers of Loaf
The Speed of Cattle
Alias (CD)

9. Paul Westerberg
Eventually
Reprise (advance cassette)

10. John Wesley Harding
New Deal
Forward/Rhino (CD)

10 Monster Discs to Play Today and Everyday



MARK R. SULLIVAN PHOTO

THIS HARD LAND

FROM TOWN TO TOWN:

The Ghost of Tom Joad TOUR 1995-96

11/21/95
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ
STATE THEATER
CAPACITY: 1850

The Ghost of Tom Joad
Adam Raised a Cain
Straight Time
Highway 29
Darkness on the Edge of Town
Murder Incorporated
Nebraska
If I Should Fall Behind
Born in the USA
Dry Lightning
Spare Parts
Youngstown
Sinaloa Cowboys
The Line
Balboa Park
Across the Border

Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street?
This Hard Land
Dead Man Walkin'

Galveston Bay
My Best Was Never Good Enough

SET NOTES: The live world premieres of "Straight Time," "Highway 29," "Dry Lightning," "Youngstown," "The Line," "Balboa Park," "Across the Border," "Dead Man Walkin'," "Galveston Bay," and "My Best." First acoustic version of "Murder Inc." ever. In the crowd: Bruce Hornsby, John Eddie, Ed Sciaky. This show was a benefit for World Hunger Year.

MORON FACTOR: This being the first show of the tour, the audience didn't really know what to expect, so there was plenty of yelling and "Brooocing." Springsteen chastised the crowd with what would become a nightly warning.

PRESS: "SPRINGSTEEN BEGINS TOUR AT STATE THEATER." Kelly-Jane Cotter and Diane Bakst in *The Asbury Park Press*: The Boss told them to shut up, and he brushed off their requests. But the audience loved him anyway.

This was Bruce Springsteen's turf, and from the moment he strode onstage in a black t-shirt and jeans, the audience was under his spell. After all, they had endured a Darwinian struggle to get tickets....

"You guys realize this is a rehearsal, right?" he asked, smiling, as the crowd shouted his name. He said if he messed up, he "might as well do it in front of friends." They were grateful to be there and they were rewarded with new material that sounded much better live than on the new CD....

Between songs, he asked the crowd not to cheer while he was playing. "These songs were composed with a lot of silence in them," he said. He also told them not to sing or clap along. "That'll keep me from having to come into the crowd, slap a few people around, and ruin that nice-guy image."

Reaction to the show was mixed, with die-hard fans enjoying the intimate venue while others saying they missed the liveliness of a typical Springsteen show with a full band....

The crowd was an older one compared to most concerts, with the average age about 35. They seemed both enamored of their idol and intimidated by him. When one man shouted a request for "Atlantic City," other people shushed him nervously. One man yelled: "Let the man think!" as Springsteen set up for the next song.

Springsteen took the requests in stride, asking, "What do I look like, a juke box?"...

"IT TURNED OUT SO RIGHT, FOR DANGER IN THE NIGHT." David Hinckley in the *New York Daily News*: Springsteen pals like writer Dave Marsh say it bothered Bruce 15 years ago that some fans seemed to care more about simply seeing the rock star than hearing what he had to say. The 1982 *Nebraska* album, Marsh suggests, was designed in part to lower the volume—an idea pretty much vaporized by the 1984-85 *Born in the USA* juggernaut....

So in a sense, he's now said okay, let's do it. All the way. Vocal, guitar, harmonica. He's trying to ratchet his level of stardom down to where he can reach his fans, even if that diminishes their numbers, on the level he finds most compelling.

The great ones all roll the dice....

11/22/95
RED BANK, NJ
COUNT BASIE THEATER
CAPACITY: 1500

SET NOTES: Same as 11/21 except with "Point Blank" replacing "Nebraska," and "Streets of Philadelphia" replacing "Dead Man Walkin'." This show was a benefit for the Community Food Bank of New Jersey.

MORON FACTOR: This venue is so small that there weren't that many people who could yell; however, when someone did yell, it disturbed everyone. Also high moron factor in the form of the following critic.

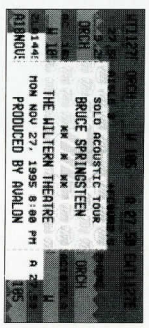
PRESS: "THE GHOST OF BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN." Uncle Mike in the *Two River Times*: ...I'm sitting in the Count Basie listening to Bruce lay out the ground rules for his concert and I'm saying to myself, I wonder how the "old boss" would feel about the "new boss" lecturing his audience on how they should behave during the show. I always thought that an audience's response was a result of the artist's performance. What does this say about Bruce's opinion of his fans.... From where I sat on this night, the Boss appeared to be tense and ill at ease. There was hardly a trace of that easy-going Springsteen sense of humor.... I can't help but feel that *The Ghost of Tom Joad* is more like "The Ghost of Bruce Springsteen."...

"TURN ON THE LIGHTS." Michelle Amabile in the *Aquarian Weekly*: This was Springsteen at his most intimate, baring his soul with stripped down tributes to his newest American underdogs—immigrant workers.... Springsteen appeared almost vulnerable in this setting, becoming the solo artist CBS envisioned in the early '70s....

DIANE'S COMMENTS: I was one of the lucky ones to be at this show, in an aisle seat five rows behind Patti and the kids. The whole show was an absolutely incredible experience, including watching Evan looking at his dad onstage with wide-eyed adoration. As a Bruce fan for many years, I have never missed a tour. But if I never see him in concert again, I will be happy with the memory of the acoustic show.—*Diane Portantiere*

MARY BETH'S COMMENTS: When he did "Streets of Philadelphia," he introduced it by thanking Jonathan Demme for bringing him back to writing about issues. Towards the end of the song some people tried to get a "clap-along" going, and it clearly broke Bruce's concentration. This was an encore, so he walked off stage when it was over. When he returned he said, "Now I know why I play that song with a band.... What did I tell you about that fucking clapping?"

When Bruce came out of the theater there were television lights on him—"60 Minutes." Bruce got in his car, and as security cleared the crowds to make way for him to pull out of the lot, I was suddenly right next to the car. Bruce started to pull forward and then stopped right in front of me and his window was down. He said to the crowd, "Hey, how are you? I want to ask you a question." Of course, everyone was going nuts. So he says, "What do you think of Ticketmaster service charges?" Everyone erupted with, "They suck." So Bruce turns over his shoulder back to where the TV cameras are, and says, "See, my people have spoken."—*Mary Beth Wilson*



11/26-27/95
LOS ANGELES, CA
WILTERN THEATER
CAPACITY: 2300

11/26 SET NOTES: Same set as 11/21.

11/27 SET NOTES: Same set as 11/21 except "If I Should Fall Behind" was not played and Bruce premiered "It's the Little Things That Count."

PRESS: "REBORN IN THE U.S.A." Erik Flannigan for *Mr. Showbiz*: In 1985, Bruce played four nights at the L.A. Coliseum to a combined audience of more than 300,000 people. Ten years later and just a few miles away, he played a pair of solo acoustic shows to just over 2,000 fans per night.

Kicking off a seven-city U.S. tour, these shows marked his evolution from "Bruce: Man of the People" to "Bruce: Artist." The opening-night performance at the Wiltern offered few compromises....

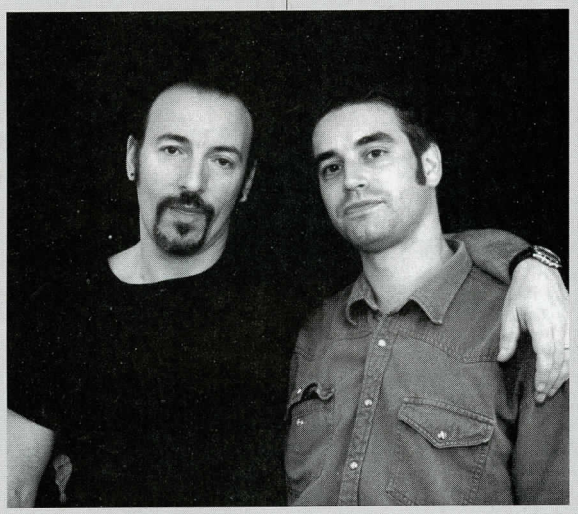
The songs from *The Ghost of Tom Joad* became more sharply distinct away from the relatively homogenous album.... Springsteen alternated between six- and twelve-string acoustic guitars, and managed to give each song a unique reading. He closed the main set in pure storyteller mode, seated on a wooden chair, singing the album's four-song cycle about the plight of illegal immigrants. The last, the hopeful "Across the Border," was the most memorable—Springsteen sang it with a resolute admiration for those who find the will to move on in the face of adversity, but resisted

TRUDY FISHER PHOTOS

AMERICAN STUDIES 101, U OF CA

Though Roy Bittan has always had the nickname "the Professor," he might need to share it with his boss. Seeing Bruce's recent *The Ghost of Tom Joad* solo tour in Berkeley was like walking into an American Studies class. Instructor: Professor Bruce Springsteen, Ph.D. Subject: Multiculturalism and the American West. My grade: B+.

Though the Berkeley shows were the only ones I saw on the tour (I listened to plenty of others on tape), I imagine that these particular concerts were the most lecture-like of any on the tour because of the setting and the hall. Berkeley is best known for its university, and it appeared that the bulk of the audience was made up of either professors (in herring-bone jackets) or students (in J. Crew) from Cal. Springsteen usually attracts an older audience in the States, but this particular demographic was not just older, they were also decidedly left of mainstream—you could find the exact same crowd at a Noam Chomsky lecture or a Luis Bunuel retrospective at the Bijou.



"PROFESSOR" SPRINGSTEEN AND JOHN WESLEY HARDING

And my perceptions were heightened by the hall itself: The Berkeley Community Theater is really the auditorium of Berkeley High School. It's in the middle of a large school campus, and walking there felt going to a school function. The facility doesn't have a bar or even concession stands (the best you could do for thirst was an old-style porcelain drinking fountain). Without such distractions, the crowd sat in their seats and stayed quiet. The Berkeley audience was perhaps the best behaved of the entire tour, and to say "you could hear a pin drop" was no exaggeration. Springsteen became annoyed at hearing the shutters click on two cameras and kicked out news photographers before the second song.

The crowd may have been quieted by something Berkeley had that no other shows on the tour sported—an opening act. This concert was Bruce's first in almost two decades to have an opener, and San Francisco's own John Wesley Harding did a swell job. Wes's short set was a both a crowd pleaser and a mellowing-out period for fans to get used to being at a concert.

By the time Springsteen came on and gave his usual lecture about talking and clapping, there was already no need for the warning to be quiet. The audience listened in rapt silence as Professor Springsteen told tales of the American West, of the collapse of the Rust Belt economy, of the consequences of criminal behavior, of the social costs of life lived on the fringe. He talked as much as he sang, and some of the stories that prefaced the songs were as long and as detailed as the songs themselves. Though Springsteen has always been known as a storyteller, on this tour the introductions have become intertwined with the music to create what is almost a new form of performance art.

As Springsteen said in every interview he gave on this tour, he envisioned this as an album tour and not an "Unplugged" *Greatest Hits* event. For the most part, he pulled that off, though by the end of the show (particularly the encores) I thought the set lost the focus he had built up to during the previous hour. I haven't liked a Springsteen encore set since the *Darkness* tour, and I didn't particularly like this one, since his encores always pander to the lowest common denominator, usually the frat-rock side of his music. This time we didn't get frat rock (at least not in Berkeley) but the encore choices seemed at odds with the seriousness of the rest of the show. I know people enjoyed songs like "Bus Stop" (as did I), yet I didn't think they fit with the rest of the show.

But if you were looking for intellectual fulfillment, these two concerts had plenty to offer. Once Springsteen sat down, the concerts got even better and he was more focused and less concerned with the need to entertain. The set ends with the brilliant "Border Suite," and in Berkeley this included "The New Timer." The crescendo of the night came with the vocal percussion that Springsteen added to the end of "Across the Border," and as he let loose with his small, pained yelps, he captured, without words, the human emotion his lyrics were seeking to explain.

It was strange to see a Bruce Springsteen show that concentrated so much on one album, but it was a refreshing change from the crowd-pleasing affairs of the past. The past four tours have started off focused, but as Springsteen rolled on (particularly in Europe) they all have devolved into party fests with the bulk of the material coming from *Born in the USA*. If Springsteen can remain committed to touring behind this album—and playing these new songs and only adding in tunes that fit with them thematically—this tour will be one of his most memorable. To do that, he'll have to avoid the habit of throwing in the "Bobby Jean" crowd-pleasers and stick with the material from *The Ghost of Tom Joad* and acoustic gems in his catalog (particularly those from *Nebraska*) that might work in this class... I mean, concert.—*Charles R. Cross*

the temptation to turn it into an uplifting set closer....

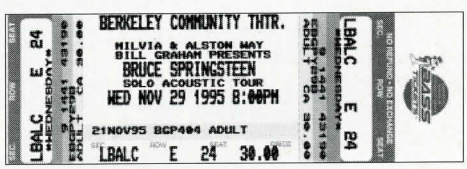
The old and new songs meshed effectively, but the performance as a whole would have benefited from the inclusion of a few additional older songs. They wouldn't necessarily add to the primary story Springsteen was telling, but might have helped to complete the night, which ended on an odd note with the cliché-skewering ditty "My Best."

"THE ACOUSTIC BRUCE LACKS CREDENTIALS." Barry Koltnow in the *Orange County Register*: I loved it when Bruce Springsteen only wanted to be Elvis. Now he is determined to be Woody Guthrie. I hate it.... The less-than-two-hours show, which in sheer time was a laugher by Springsteen standards (he usually doesn't take off his first layer of shirts until the two hour mark), was the most depressing of any Springsteen show I've ever seen. And I don't mean depressing in a good way.... The fact is, Bruce's new album is a joke, and so was his concert. What happened to this man's ability to write meaningful lyrics? Or to excite an audience? John Tesh has stirred more emotions than Bruce did Sunday night.

The first problem is that Bruce doesn't have the credentials to sing about the downtrodden in this way. He is not a lonely troubadour wandering the back roads of the Southwest, sitting around campfires swapping stories about being uprooted and forgotten. He is, in fact, a rich rocker who lives in Beverly Hills who grabs a bite to eat at Dantana's and drops by the House of Blues once in a while to play a few tunes with his friends. He appears at swanky benefits for Frank Sinatra, composes Oscar-winning themes and soaks in his hot tub.

The second problem is that he can't tell a story anymore. He is not Bob Dylan, who I suspect he would really like to be if the Woody Guthrie thing doesn't work out. The lyrics of his songs sound as if he is reading a news story about tragic events while strumming the same monotonous chords over and over again.

Now the classic retort to a diatribe like this is that I am not allowing an artist to grow. Ha! There *is* no growth being done. It is all regression. The guy's lost it. The slide began when he unceremoniously dumped the E Street Band, continued when he hooked up with Sting, and has gone unabated ever since. Those last two albums were sure worth the money, weren't they? It will not end until someone has the guts to stand up and tell him that he has gone off the deep end....



11/29-30/95
BERKELEY, CA
BERKELEY COMMUNITY THEATER
CAPACITY: 3491

11/29 SET NOTES: Same set as 11/27.

11/30 SET NOTES: Same set as 11/27, with the addition of the live premiere of "The

New Timer," making this the first show with every song from *GOTJ*. John Wesley Harding opened both shows, Bruce's first opening act since 1978.

TICKETS: Tickets were easier for 11/29 than on any date on the tour. Scalpers were asking face value but getting $10 or less. There had been a large ticket dump early in the evening which diminished scalping. On the second night, a long line of people waited for the ticket dump—many had tickets but were hoping to upgrade—but surprisingly there were only a handful of tickets released at show time. By that time the few scalpers that were around had gone home, so many fans were left without tickets—which just a few hours earlier could have been had for face value.

MORON FACTOR: Opening act Harding seemed to help settle everyone down and the crowd did most of their seat shuffling during his set. Berkeley Community Theater is a high school auditorium and as a result there were no concession sales, no alcohol, and in fact, nothing other than t-shirts sold at the concert. All in all, the quietest and best-behaved audience of the tour.

PRESS: "WAITING WITH BRUCE." Michael Goldberg for *Addicted to Noise*: ...The show itself was simply stunning. Performing in a theater where Bob Dylan had performed acoustically some 30 years earlier, there were echoes of those mid-'60s acoustic Dylan performances, yet Springsteen demonstrated his own unique approach to a solo show. While the new material was very moving, it was his reinvention of classics like "Born in the USA," done as a dirge with brain-rattling slide guitar, and "Spare Parts," revised as a folk-blues piece that really knocked me out. A solo show—not the kind of fake "unplugged" thing that MTV does, but a performance in which one person, with an acoustic guitar and a harmonica, not only holds the attention of an audience for nearly two hours, but truly captivates them—is the true test of a musician's talent. It's damn hard to hide the failings of one's voice, one's songs or one's instrumental ability when it's just you facing your audience....

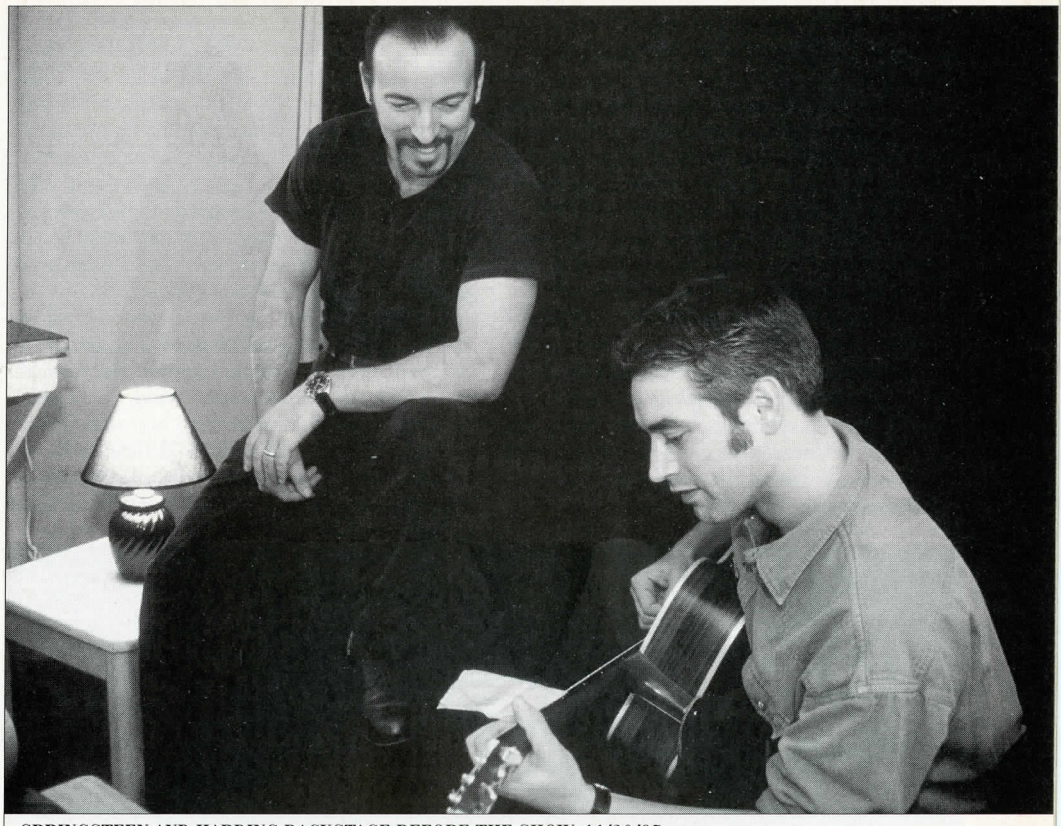
HARRY'S COMMENTS: Imagine you're sitting in a *big* living room with Bruce singing his heart and soul out to you and your closest friends for two hours....The first night was a night I could only have dreamed of. Clarence sat three seats in front of me and signed my ticket stub. Then, after waiting nearly three hours after the show for Bruce to come out of the theater, Bruce autographed my 1975 *Newsweek*. I told him I'd waited ten years for this night just to say "Thank you, thank you for everything, most of all thank you for the music, it's meant so much to me."

As Bruce signed for the other 40 or so people, I noticed that Jon Landau was sitting in the car waiting; I waved to him and after a short while he opened the door. I asked him if he would autograph my *Newsweek*, he glanced over his shoulder at Bruce then jokingly said to me, "If he sees me doing this he's really gonna give me a hard time about it." As Jon signed, I told him I'd flown down from Tacoma and asked if the tour would be coming to the Northwest. Jon paused and said, "As a matter of fact, yes, probably around June or July." —*Harry Blaisure*

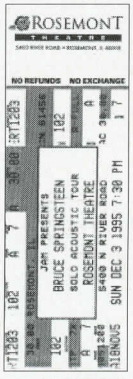
STEVE'S COMMENTS: John Wesley Harding was really great, a strong musician and showman. He played very hot guitar, especially at the end of his short set. He thanked Bruce several times and said, with little or no apparent irony, "It's the biggest honor of my life to be on stage here."

Bruce told the crowd that his mom was in the audience, also adding that he was last in Berkeley Community Theater on Halloween Night 1975. [Editor's note: His last Berkeley show was actually 7/1/78—Bruce was thinking of the 10/31/75 show at the Paramount Theater in Oakland.] He said the only thing he remembered is that he got "the shit panned out of me" in the papers. And that "I had the stupidest shades. I looked at the picture—what was I thinking?"

One of the most interesting moments was right at the beginning of the first encore, when he said, "They are doing a profile of me for '60 Minutes.' It's a little unusual. They said, 'Just be yourself.' This raises a lot of questions—which self? They said, 'Don't do anything staged,' then they point a camera at me. I realize wherever you are with a camera, you're on stage. You can't be yourself. After a show like this I like to go out and slap the fans around a bit. But I can't do that. The driver takes me to an expensive hotel, and then I do drugs and go to sleep. But I can't do that. In New Jersey I had to sign autographs, drive my car, I had to do the regular guy bit, which at this point is very boring. Woe is me." And then he launched into "Does This Bus Stop"—*Steven Svoboda*



SPRINGSTEEN AND HARDING BACKSTAGE BEFORE THE SHOW, 11/30/95.



12/3/95
CHICAGO, IL
ROSEMONT THEATER
CAPACITY: 4200

SET NOTES: Same set as 11/30. In the audience: Eric Dinyer, the Kansas City artist whose painting was used for the new album's cover; filmmaker Peter Bogdanovich.

TICKETS: The ticket dump was only 17 tickets, about a fourth of the number of fans waiting in line.

MORON FACTOR: Very high with lots of yelling and "Brooocing," and lots of camera flashes going off.

PRESS: "SPRINGSTEEN MOPES AND DOESN'T WANNA HAVE ANY FUN." *Rolling Stone Online* reports: Professor Bruce Springsteen's sociology lectures are highly entertaining; it's just that you have to get up early on a Saturday morning, wait in long Ticketmaster lines and pay $30 to see him speak.

Springsteen's first-ever acoustic tour...is spare and powerful but hardly intimate. There was no spontaneity and, even though he told interesting stories before songs, no give-and-take with the audience. In fact, until Springsteen opened the encore with the funny chestnut "Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street?" there was almost no break from the bleak, quiet mood of his new album....

The show's problem was its academic tone. Many of Springsteen's fans follow him because they saw him jump into the audience once upon a time, or bring people on stage to dance with him, or respond with warmth to a request.

Here, instead, he immediately admonished the crowd not to clap, cheer or sing along during the songs....

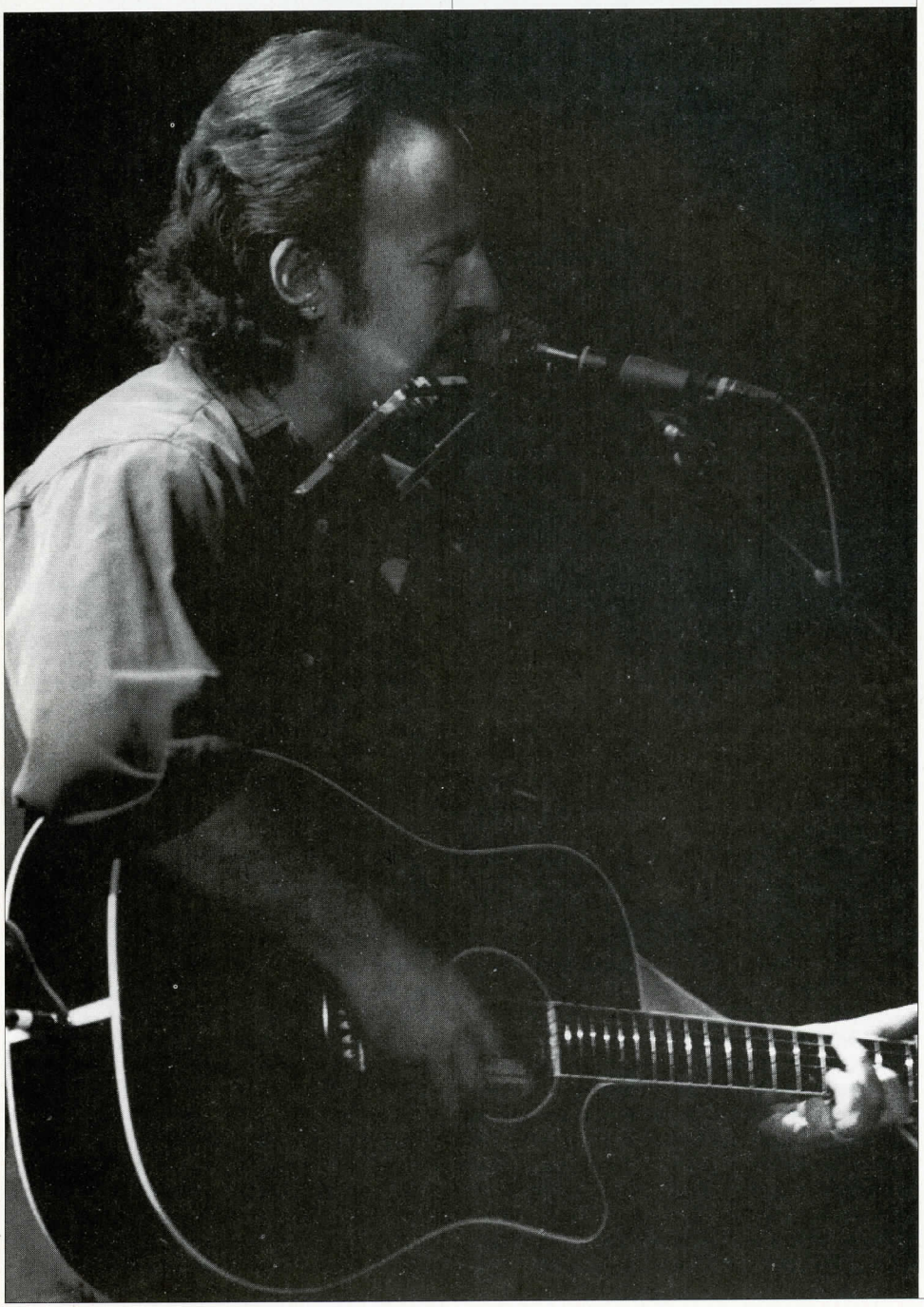
That prevailing morality, along with his unwillingness to have any fun with the crowd, made him sound more like a parent than the guy who chased Crazy Janey around in "Sprit in the Night." If he had told the crowd, "Don't listen to 'Rosalita' or 'Born to Run' anymore; they're for kids," it wouldn't have seemed out of place. Just depressing.

"SPRINGSTEEN'S TONE TURNS SOBER." Greg Kot in the *Chicago Tribune*: In contrast to past tours, which have been celebratory events tinged by introspection, Springsteen brought a sobering sense of solitude to his two-hour set. Sleeves rolled up and hair slicked back, he asked the audience at the outset to respect the silence in his new songs.

He lost momentum, when he bunched "Sinaloa Cowboys," "The Line" and "Balboa Park" into a snapshot sociology lesson about illegal immigrants. Though well-intended, the stark songs creaked along sleepily, in dire need of a few more chord changes, a melody, anything to spark their stories. But with the lovely "Across the Border," Springsteen expanded on the album version with an eerie, wordless vocal that did indeed make it seem as though the ghost of Tom Joad had come to visit.

In these moments, and there were several at this concert, Springsteen forged a community of compassion and made tangible the notion that maybe, as he expressed, "We're all tiny little parts of one big soul."

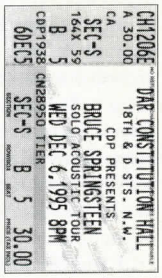
DAVID'S COMMENTS: I flew in from Tokyo to catch the show. I hadn't heard any of the new songs, so I really had to pay attention to understand. Sitting still like that and listening so hard is difficult, but worth it. Extended introductions to every song except the opener—that's one thing we all love about Bruce, those intros that set the scenes, and we got our fill. I've never seen him so focused in putting a vision across, and you could even hear people breathing. The stretch of songs near the end about immigration, prostitution, and drug running near the Mexican Border was the most powerful for me. High, sweet moaning at the end of "Across the Border" almost a prayer, the most beautiful sound he made all night—where did that come from?... A night with Mom and Bruce is a good thing to come for from the other side of the world. *—David Gregory*



MARK R. SULLIVAN PHOTO

12/5-6/95 WASHINGTON, D.C. D.A.R. CONSTITUTION HALL

CAPACITY: 2300



12/5 SET NOTES: Same set as 11/30, meaning Bruce played three shows in a row with the exact same set.

BRIAN'S COMMENTS: The new songs were alive, showing depth and dimension that one must work to find on the CD. Bruce's performance of "Youngstown" was superb, driving home the song's picture of abandonment with a plain, unaffected voice that embodied utter death.

"Straight Time" and "Dead Man Walkin'" seemed less like performances and more like exorcisms, as Bruce's impassioned vocal brought the demons tormenting the characters into full view.... Bruce's re-working of the older material generally succeeded, often illuminating dimensions of the songs that, on earlier tours, were easily overlooked. "Born in the USA" was simply stunning, completely unlike the 1986 or 1993 acoustic performances, and a step beyond even last month's performance at the Basie. The song's brooding tone, intensity and relentless rhythm suggested the possibilities of a full-band arrangement. It conjured images of the E Street Band of the future—not of the past, as "Darkness" unfortunately did.

"Spare Parts" also benefited from a completely new arrangement that highlighted the song's lyrical structure. "Murder Inc." and "Adam" were enjoyable, but fared less well. "Does This Bus Stop" did not fit in the set at all, but it sent chills down my back.*—Brian G. Svoboda*

JEFF'S COMMENTS: A funny tidbit—in between songs in the middle of the set, a fan screams out, "Let's rock, Bruce!" Bruce hesitates for a minute then responds, "That's what I'm doing," as he goes into a slower song. Audience cracks up. *—Jeff Leikin*

12/6 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Mansion on the Hill/Little Things/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Reason to Believe/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/My Best

12/6 SET NOTES: "Mansion on the Hill" replaces "Nebraska," "Reason to Believe" replaces "Spare Parts," and "Streets of Philadelphia" replaces "Dead Man Walkin'." First tour versions of "Mansion on the Hill," and "Reason to Believe," the latter song performed in a completely new version. "The New Timer" was in brackets on the set list (after "Balboa Park") but was not played. Bruce adds his Dylan impression to "Does This Bus Stop."

MORON FACTOR: Bruce faced a louder audience than on any of the West Coast shows. At one point someone yelled "Hey, Bruce! We love you, man!" to which Bruce replied "Yeah? We'll go have tea sometime!" (reminding many of the Christic Institute banter).

PRESS: "THE BOSS: QUIET EXCELLENCE." J.D. Considine in the *Baltimore Sun*: Working with just his voice and an acoustic guitar, Springsteen was quietly dazzling, demonstrating complete command of his instrument without ever seeming to show off.

That's not to say there wasn't any fancy playing. He made masterful use of the bottleneck on "Spare Parts," slamming it against the strings until the guitar crackled like thunder...But on the whole, he avoided guitar heroics.... By the time he got to the encores...the crowd was even more smitten than at the start. But it would have been hard to imagine the listener who wouldn't have been won over by a performance that personable and powerful.

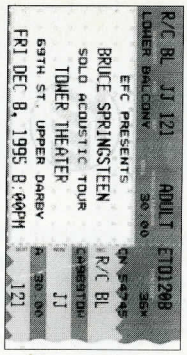
JIM'S COMMENTS: For the second night in a row, Springsteen seemed pleased with the show and genuinely happy with where things went. He gave his customary warnings at the start, but was friendly throughout (a feeling I felt was missing from the State Theater show).

For those who suggested high school gyms as possible venues, the DC venue (a hall, not a theater) showed just how important it is to be in a small theater with good sound. While Bruce did an admirable job, and the sound was good on the floor, upstairs it got distorted in the open air (the harmonica especially) and the show lost a good deal of its intimacy.

Was it a mistake to sell these tickets before *GOTJ* was released given that Bruce was coming off the *Greatest Hits* album? It seems to me the demand would have been much lower had a lot of people known what this tour was going to be like. At all the shows I've seen, I've heard people complaining every night about the length, depression, etc.—*Jim Oleske*

BRIAN'S COMMENTS: The cylinders didn't really seem to be firing on Wednesday night in a set that wasn't quite as good as the first night. Technical problems vexed Bruce on "Murder Inc." and "Little Things" ("Ah, fuck," Bruce murmured as he struggled with the harmonica sound on the latter).... But if Wednesday night's show hit some potholes, one of the song swaps perhaps foreshadowed some great moments down the road. Springsteen premiered a demented, scary version of "Reason to Believe" that bore no resemblance to any prior performance of the song. Like "Born in the USA" on Tuesday, one wondered what the E Street Band could do with such a song structure.—*Brian G. Svoboda*

12/8-9/95 TOWER THEATER UPPER DARBY, PA
CAPACITY: 3068



12/8 SET: Tom Joad/ Adam/Straight Time/ Highway 29/Darkness/ Murder Inc./Nebraska/Little Things/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Reason to Believe/ Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/ The Line/Balboa Park/The New Timer/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/My Best

12/8 SET NOTES: "The New Timer" was not on the set list yet was played and "Mansion on the Hill" was on but was not played. Bruce donated his take of the merchandise sales to the Philadelphia Food Bank.

MORON FACTOR: Extremely high.

SUSAN'S COMMENTS: I hereby renounce my Philly-metro citizenship. I've always been proud of my hometown audience for their exuberance, but last night they were an embarrassment. It didn't help that the Tower didn't observe the nicety of not seating people during songs either.

"Reason to Believe" was interesting. Not sure that I actually liked it, but I think I understood that Bruce was again reinventing a misunderstood song. On that other "misunderstood" song, Bruce (jokingly?) said it was only the "goddamn Republicans" who misunderstood *BUSA* anyway. He added a half-hearted slap at the Democrats, probably for balance. Also said Newt Gingrich had been stoned on acid at the DC show.

He didn't stop on the way in or out for the meet and greet (where *are* those "60 Minutes" cameras when you need 'em?). And as long as I'm nit-picking, could someone please tell Bruce how to pronounce "regale"? I cringe every time I hear him say how he's gonna "regal the audience."—*Susan West*

CHRIS'S COMMENTS: I had expected a warm reception for Bruce here in Philly, but in all honesty, I thought the audience sucked! They yelled and screamed throughout the show, ("Rosalita" was heard several times), the couple in front of us spoke all through "Across the Border" until we shushed them so much they finally just got up and left; the folks behind us conversed during "Galveston Bay," and others around us kept getting up and going out to the lobby for hot dogs and refreshments. I don't think Bruce was quite honest when he thanked the crowd after the show for complying with his requests for silence....

At the end of the show, Bruce introduced Kevin Buell, his guitar tech, noting that he also plays those "phantom keyboards" on a couple of songs.—*Chris Papaleonardos*

12/9 SET NOTES: "Mansion on the Hill" replaces "Nebraska" (for Bruce's sister Ginny who was in the audience), "Spare Parts" replaces "Reason to Believe," and for the first time this tour, "Blinded by the Light" replaces "Does This Bus Stop."

MORON FACTOR: At one point Bruce said during an intro, "This song takes place in San Diego," and someone yelled out, "Play something about the East—New Jersey, man." The crowd was again restless—there was a lot of drinking—and at one point a fight even broke out in the audience.

PRESS: "BRUCE SERENADES PHILLY." Chris Nelson reports on *Addicted to Noise*: ...I was lucky enough to speak for a few moments with Springsteen and manager Landau. I asked Landau if a recording of any of these intimate shows would ever be released in its entirety. He agreed that the concerts were indeed special affairs, although he offered no insight about whether the world at large would ever get to hear them.

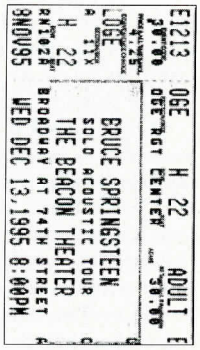
If such an album were planned for release, I'd like to offer that the second night in Philly may in fact be the perfect show for the record. Of course there are more dates to come, and you never know what Springsteen has up his sleeve. As someone who has been fortunate enough to see two other shows on this mini-tour, however, I can say that Saturday's performance was simply stunning, and the best of the three I've witnessed....

SUSAN'S COMMENTS: Using the same "this is why I didn't do drugs" intro used for "Bus Stop," Bruce did a raucous "Blinded by the Light." He incorporated the Dylan impression somewhere around "in Zanzibar a shooting star," cracked himself up, then came up blank on the "kidnapped handicap" line. Surprisingly, he didn't seem to be using the TelePrompTer much for this, and just let it rip. The singing/clapping/hooting/Brooocing was totally appropriate, and it was just a very fun moment.—*Susan West*

JOHN'S COMMENTS: "Blinded" blew the roof off and blew everyone away. Of course, he didn't get through it without messing up. He messed up twice, but laughed it off along with the crowd.

Bruce's aunts and his sister hung out a little before and after the show, and they sat in the front row. Introducing "My Best" as a song he wrote in his kitchen with his family cheering him on, you could clearly hear an older woman yell, "Ooooh!" Bruce tried to ignore it but began to laugh. Feigning embarrassment, he grumbled, "My aunt...." He jokingly admonished the front row by saying, "If you can't behave, that's the last time you guys get the good seats!" —*John Schlicher*

12/12-13/95 NEW YORK, NY BEACON THEATER
CAPACITY: 4000



12/12 SET NOTES: Same set as 12/8. In the crowd: Patti Scialfa, Elaine Steinbeck, Michael Moore of "Roger and Me" fame, Dave Pirner, Mariah Carey, Tommy Mottola, and Peter Gabriel. A post-show party is held at Josie's, just around the corner. WNEW gave

DAVID GLACKEN PHOTO

away a free promotional single for "Tom Joad" on both nights to anyone who brought a winter coat for the homeless.

PRESS: "HARD TIMES AND NO SILVER LINING." Jon Pareles in the *New York Times*: ...For just over two hours, Mr. Springsteen stood alone with his guitar, singing about people crushed by hard times and bad decisions.... The music was somber and austere, with flashes of bitter vehemence. Mr. Springsteen sang with a gruff, burdened voice, moving deliberately through his cramped melodies as if he was giving mournful testimony....

Given his material, Mr. Springsteen turned in a painstaking and convincing performance. But with that material, he has turned himself into nearly a one-note performer. His songs have grown single-mindedly grim; he even played "It's the Little Things That Count," a song about a seduction, as if it were a tragedy. Mr. Springsteen has lost faith in music's multiplicity, its potential to make people ache and tap their toes at the same time, or to hear both misery and resilience. He may have reasons; he saw "Born in the USA," despite its unmistakably bleak verses, turned into a jingoistic anthem. Yet when Woody Guthrie wrote about the down trodden, he also provided catchy choruses and sarcastic wit, and Tom Joad's ghost, as the song says, is a fighter. Mr. Springsteen, envisioning a modern Depression, has taken his music to an extreme, a depressive's view of tedious, unending woe.

JON'S COMMENTS: "Reason to Believe" was radically reworked from its '84/85 incarnation. Really wild intro sung in falsetto followed by a "Spare Parts"-like guitar intro; more falsetto in the second verse followed by an '85-like "Johnny 99" vocal delivery. Very odd, very experimental, and very good.

"Does This Bus Stop" gets better all the time. I'd assume he listened to the original version to really get an idea of how the song should be played. Tonight's was really amazing. Very animated and included the Dylan delivery on one of the lines in the third verse.

"The New Timer" was great to hear, and "Across the Border" followed an impassioned speech during which Bruce mentioned the Steinbeck influence and how it has remained a part of his vision since age 26. Elaine Steinbeck, the writer's third wife, was in attendance and Bruce dedicated the song to her. Another great show. I was impressed mostly by what he had to say and further by the strength of the material.—*Jon Pont*

KEVIN'S COMMENTS: It's been two and a half years since New York City fans booed Terence Trent D'Arby when Bruce shared his stage with him. Obviously, from their behavior on Tuesday, not much has changed. While it seemed that everyone in the house was happy to be seeing a Bruce performance, I can't for the life of me figure out why so many people had to leave their seats over the course of the show. We're talking hundreds of people moving either back to their seats or out to the lobby between every song. At one point, while the lobby doors were open, it sounded like a cocktail party was going on up there. Bruce's only mention of the situation came at the end of the show when he said he was "tempted a couple of times" to go out and smack a few people around. Fortunately for me, it was my fourth show on the tour so I can at least say that I've seen this amazing show without distractions. I didn't even mention all the chatter going on during Bruce's monologues.—*Kevin Baker*

12/13 SET NOTES: Included "Mansion on the Hill" instead of "Nebraska." In the crowd: Richard Gere, Tim Robbins, Bob Costas, Shayne Fontayne.

MORON FACTOR: One guy in the orchestra kept yelling at Bruce during almost every song. When Bruce sat down, the guy yelled, "What are you an old man? Ya got to sit down?" He was eventually escorted out.

CHARLOTTE'S COMMENTS: Probably the worst show of the tour (and we saw five). Thanks to the usual idiots—record company freebies and celebs who drank beer, smoked pot, constantly walked up and down the rows and aisles (both during and between songs), snickered at/mimicked Bruce, and shouted all night—the show was as close to a disaster as we've seen this tour. Unfortunately for the true fans, Bruce's performance appeared to suffer as a result. We feel sorry for any true fans who only saw this show. If most people expected 1984 (especially if they paid the scalpers), too bad. Bruce deserved better and so did his fans who supported him.—*Charlotte Abo and Anthony Comitini*

ERIC'S COMMENTS: Highlights for me included the reworkings, or rather the dismantling, of "Adam" (almost unrecognizable), "Darkness," "Born in the USA" (vitriolic, blazing, and chilling), "Reason to Believe," and "Does This Bus Stop," probably the show's popular highlight (at least the audience was permitted to get off its butts). The *GOTJ* songs did indeed come off more powerfully, with the lyrics ringing out pure and clear across the theater; "Across the Border" was emotionally spellbinding, filled with pain and hope. And it was great to hear those introductions, which really helped explain some of the new songs for those unfamiliar with the material (but which probably helped Bruce more).—*Eric Eisenstein*

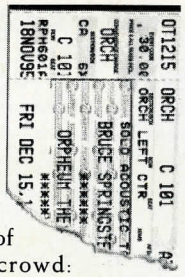
JOE'S COMMENTS: I had something of an epiphany on the first night during "Straight Time." As I listened to the story and reflected on the personal truth I found in the words "seems you can't get anymore than half-free," it struck me that once again Bruce had made that "connection" that he always claims to be aiming for. I remembered the first time I'd seen him in 1984 when I felt that same sensation—during a cheerful tale of contemplation of suicide in the middle of "Growin' Up." That was my first sense of being a part of the sort of "spontaneous communities" that seem to manifest at this guy's concerts.

On Tuesday night, I felt like he was raising the stakes during his explanation of "The New Timer" (surely an instant classic in the folk genre). When he sang the chilling final verse, it struck me that it was something of a through-line for the whole show: the notion that a lot of folks are walking around these days with a vague sense of free-floating anger and betrayal speaks volumes about the need for a public discourse on the subject.

Living in NYC, I spend my fair share of time gritting my teeth, clenching my fists, and sucking it in just to make it through the day, and I know a lot of my friends feel the same way. If Springsteen is keeping his finger on the pulse of America, it stands to reason that this record and tour are the only appropriate response to our current political climate and sagging sense of fellowship. I would have also enjoyed an "Unplugged" hits show, but I think I prefer this braver, more thought-provoking show.—*Joe Vernon*

THE BOSS REACHES THE PROMISED LAND

12/15-16/95
BOSTON, MA
ORPHEUM THEATER
CAPACITY: 2790



12/15 SET NOTES: Same set as 12/12 (Included "Nebraska," "Reason to Believe," "Little Things," "The New Timer," "Streets of Philadelphia."). In the crowd: Stephen King and family.

MORON FACTOR: During one of the *Tom Joad* intros a woman called out, "But Bruce, you're a millionaire!" The crowd quickly responded with some "audience policing." One guy yelled out a request for "Does the Bus Stop at 42nd Street?"

PRESS: "FOR SPRINGSTEEN, A DARK DECONSTRUCTION." Jim Sullivan writes in the *Boston Globe*: Friday's show was nothing less than deconstruction, bordering on catalog deletion. And, there's some bitter irony there. That catalog made him the rich, well-respected man that he is; he certainly doesn't think an unknown artist who put out *Tom Joad* would be packing the Orpheum for two nights at $30 a ticket. No, the fans were there because of the legacy, the memories of good times and the hope that Springsteen would wrest some pleasure out of these painful songs.

He did. Not consistently—and especially not near the end where the toll became wearing. When Springsteen's protagonist-mule swallowed the balloon of cocaine, I almost laughed. We know Bruce favors the working man, but another (after "Sinaloa Cowboys") messed-up drug guy we're to sympathize with?...He doesn't pretend to be the answer man; fame hasn't made him put up blinders to those who are less fortunate; he's obviously chosen the hard way over the easy way as an artist. Heck, he even admits to finding out about Tom Joad from the John Ford movie, not the John Steinbeck novel. No elitism there. But Friday night's set suffered from good intentions—too long, too much compassion fatigue—and was bogged down, frankly, by songwriting that is just too linear. One doesn't demand the epic sweep of a "Jungleland," the spine-tingling jolts of a "Candy's Room" or the timeless pop lilt of a "Because the Night." But, sonically speaking, you wanted *hints* of these things, more than the bare-bones folkie framework Springsteen offered.

JONATHAN'S COMMENTS: For as long as I can remember, my father has always loved Springsteen. For the longest time, I never understood why. I remember how in second grade, when "Born in the USA" had just been released, I would mockingly sing the chorus of that song to my dad repeatedly. He'd just smile and say, "Someday, you'll understand."

Last month, I stood in line for tickets to the Wiltern Theater show in L.A., but to no avail. My dad, who has since moved to Boston, also attempted to get tickets, so I called him, expecting to commiserate. Instead, he told me that he had a pair of balcony seats to one of Bruce's Boston shows. He asked me if I wanted to come along....

On an otherwise miserable winter weekend, there was a familiar ray of sunshine for fans in the Boston area: Bruce Springsteen was coming to town. His mid-December visit came exactly 15 years after his two *River* shows at the Boston Garden, and just over three years since his *Lucky Town* shows there in 1992. In Boss years, that's a regular holiday tradition.

There wouldn't be any "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town" this time, though. The closest this would get to your typical holiday entertainment would be more along the lines of "A Christmas Carol." From the visitation of the ghost in the opening song, Springsteen's acoustic show offers a more extended and disturbing vision of the present than some might like (couldn't we have a little more time with the Ghost of Springsteen *Past*?). But it's out of our control, and as Scrooge would realize not a moment too soon: the guy's got a point. And as we've come to expect, he makes it in a powerfully moving way.

The two Orpheum Theater shows were a striking reminder of the honing that takes place as Bruce performs night after night. The *Joad* songs have clearly come alive in the concert setting—*The Ghost of Tom Joad*, as powerful as it is, seems like a preliminary sketch compared to the show Springsteen has developed. One has to wonder how the record would sound if he had taken the songs on the road first, or even recorded it live. Springsteen has found a voice for these songs, one beyond the muttered drawl he tended to revert to, it seemed, by default. A prime example is "Across the Border," which seems like a different song on record without the hallmark of the live rendition's high, otherworldly wail. But as Bruce himself has been saying, "The songwriter always gets the last shot."

He's let the silence that he speaks so much of inform the older songs as well. Comparing "Adam Raised a Cain" in Boston to the version he performed at the Bridge show just a few months earlier—a virtual hoe-down by contrast—it's remarkable how open he's been to reconsidering his own work. More than ever, Springsteen seems to be really listening to his own words, and, despite what must be deeply ingrained by this point, letting the lyrics take the music on a new path.

When the audience is really listening, too, as they were in Boston, it seems to close the circuit for a powerful performance. Friday night's show was a killer; Bruce's guitar work was probably more focused than on Saturday. That first night brought a consummate rendition of "Murder Inc.," and "Reason to Believe" was a high point that the next night's substitution of "Spare Parts" couldn't live up to. But for sheer exuberance in the material and that *connection* with the audience, the second show would really be the one to remember.

The first indication came about halfway through the main set. Following "Little Things" came an introduction out of many fans' dreams: "This is a song that I recorded for the last record and it didn't make it on the record but I want to play it tonight... never played it before... we'll see how I do." He went on: "It's a song about... there's a group of vets that lived up in the San Gabriel mountains in California, and it's about a fella whose daughter, who he hasn't seen, comes looking for him. It's called 'Brothers Under the Bridges.'"

It's a title that rings a bell with many fans as that of an outtake from *Born in the USA*. But according to Bruce this song was recorded for *The Ghost of Tom Joad*; it may share nothing but the title with the original unreleased track which, according to Dave Marsh's *Glory Days*, was recorded in November 1983.

Springsteen went straight from "Brothers Under the Bridges" into "Born in the USA," leaving out his standard spoken intro. The new arrangement certainly speaks for itself, but it's "Brothers Under the Bridges"—which at first seems a little unassuming and understated on its own—that really allows Bruce to pull it off. The closing verse:

"Come Memorial Day
I sat on the stand in my dress blues
I held your mother's hand
When they passed with the red, white and blue
Now one minute you're right there,
then somethin' slips..."

The turning point of that trailing, portentous last line serves as a perfect prologue for the vet's bewildered rage in "Born in the USA." On Saturday night it was devastating. Springsteen has played the two songs back-to-back at every show since.

The encores held a few more surprises. Taking time out to thank the crowd, he went a little further with his gratitude than usual: "I wanna take a second to tell you you've been just a fabulous audience to play for, and I really can't thank you enough. This music means a lot to me, and the freedom to be able to do this is a wonderful gift that you've given me tonight. I appreciate it, and I just wanna say, I love you." The "I love you" coming from Springsteen was stunning in itself. I thought someone might yell back, "But you don't really *know* us!" but apparently no one felt like messing with a good thing. Bruce quickly added that he wanted to "bus all you guys down to New York tomorrow night!"

He did the next best thing, actually, by giving the crowd another tour debut. Two in one night on this tour seems like too much to hope for, but following "Galveston Bay," Bruce uttered a few more magical words: "Here's one I ain't done yet, let's see what happens." With that he went into "The Promised Land," the clincher for this show being considered one of the best of the tour so far.

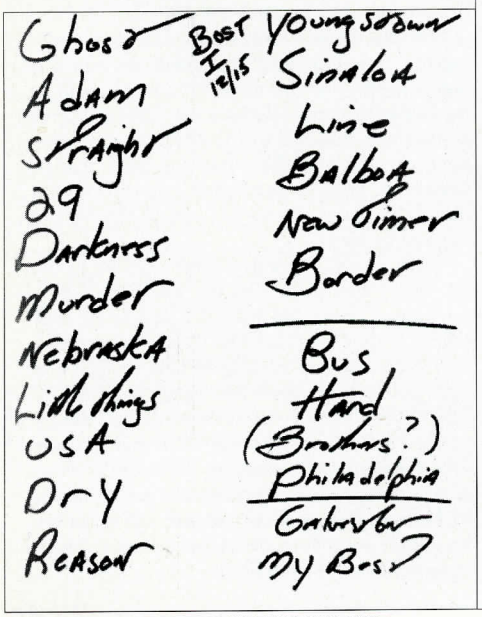
Introducing "Straight Time" earlier in the set, Bruce had described the main character's dilemma: "Those old habits... you know how that is... they feel like you. You've done somethin' a certain way for a long time, it feels like who you are. It's how you identify yourself." Springsteen, as an artist, is certainly no stranger to that feeling or to the kind of courage and self-awareness that it takes to move out of those comfortable patterns. As the tour has gone on, it's become clear that an audience willing to follow Bruce away from those old habits is amply rewarded. —*Christopher Phillips*

The most striking aspect of the concert came from the realization of what an amazing performer Bruce is. He gave a virtually technically perfect performance—I kept waiting for him to miss a note or sing out of key, and he amazed me as he exceeded my expectations. I absolutely loved the concert. His new songs come to life in this setting.

What came afterward made this an evening to remember. My father and I joined a crowd of about 25 other people in the 30 degree weather in a narrow alleyway on the side of the theater. It was dark, but three figures slowly began to emerge from the end, and I gasped as I realized that the one in the center was Bruce. As the crowd realized this, a couple of people screamed and the whole group impulsively formed a semi-circle around Bruce. What struck me was his attire—he was wearing his cap that he often wore during his legendary shows from 1975. Everybody was shaking his hand, so I finally reached my hand out and he grabbed it and looked me in the eye. Like the huge dork I am, I had a huge grin and I said "Hi, Bruce!" I was *so happy*! The most touching thing was that a woman had an envelope that said "To Bruce—please read!" She shook Bruce's hand and said, "Please take this!" Bruce looked a bit reluctant, so she said something about how it would mean so much to her. Bruce said, "How long is it?" and she whispered something into his ear, and he took it. The fans were pleasant, as was Bruce. He never cut anyone off, or acted in an impatient manner. He simply waited until everyone had had their turn, then got into the car.

My dad and I started to walk toward our subway stop, and after 50 feet we approached an intersection. Bruce's car was still waiting at the light.

Bruce looked up from reading the letter that girl had given him, saw me and my dad walking down the sidewalk, and waved to us like we were some long lost friends. He must have thought we were idiots with the huge grins we had. We were so incredibly happy. Can anyone imagine better bonding between a father and son?—*Jonathan Neal*



12/16 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Mansion on the Hill/Little Things/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Spare Parts/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land/My Best

12/16 SET NOTES: Included the world premiere of a *Tom Joad* outtake, "Brothers Under the Bridges," and the tour premiere of "The Promised Land." In the crowd: Republican Mass. State Treasurer Joe Malone. Later in the evening, Jon Landau told a Swiss journalist that he thought this was the best show of the tour so far.

PRESS: "BRUCE PLEASES HIS TOUGHEST CRITIC: HIMSELF." Steve Morse in the *Boston Globe*: Bruce Springsteen is a renowned perfectionist, but he had no complaints this weekend. "This was the best show yet," he said backstage after Saturday's date. It was the second of two Boston shows, but the first time on his tour that he felt truly comfortable blending the harshness of his new songs with a prevailing message of hope.

"Tonight I felt that I found a balance—a balance I hadn't found earlier," Springsteen said of trying to present the grim story songs of his new disc to his audience....Saturday's show was nothing short of spectacular. Springsteen has been accused of being *too* serious during his nearly month-old solo acoustic tour, but on Saturday his between-song comments had a lighter edge and he finished with a lively, upbeat version of "Promised Land." It was the first time he had played that signature tune on his tour.

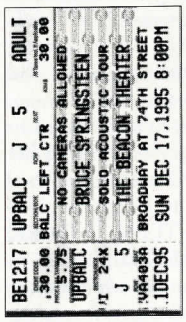
"It was the end of the night and the crowd was so great that it just felt right. I thought it added a dimension to the show that really helped it," Springsteen said, sitting on a couch...."That song is about hope and unity and faith. And that's what I'm trying to get across."

BERNIE'S COMMENTS: The best show of the tour. I've seen about ten of these, but this was by far and away the most intense Bruce was.—*Bernie Ranellone*

STEVE'S COMMENTS: The crowd was incredible. Bruce made his ritual shut-the-fuck-up announcement after the first song, and then never had to say another word on the subject. It was anything but a passive silence, by the way: You could feel people hanging on every word, and the crowd erupted after each song. (OK, it wasn't perfect. Some dimwit whistled during "Streets of Philadelphia.") There's no doubt in my mind that "Promised Land" was a direct reward for audience behavior.—*Steve Mazur*

SARAH'S COMMENTS: There was a noticeable change in the crowd. The worst I heard was a yell for "Thunder Road." Bruce noticed the crowd's politeness too. Gone were most of the "be good" lectures. Instead, he rewarded us with a new song, "Brothers under the Bridges," and an oldie, "The Promised Land." It was also one of the best performances he's ever done. And I walked out of there with my faith in everything, but most especially, myself, completely restored.

It is amazing how different the two nights were. It was snowing, and I walked around for hours looking at the snow in wonder and singing "There's magic in tonight." And, on any other night, I *hate* snow.—*Sarah Weisman*



12/17/95 NEW YORK, NY BEACON THEATER

CAPACITY: 4000

SET NOTES: Same as 12/16, except included "The Wish" (for the second time ever, the first being the 11/17/90 Christic show) instead of "Little Things"; and "Nebraska" instead of "Mansion on the Hill." Also includes "Brothers Under the Bridges" and "The Promised Land."

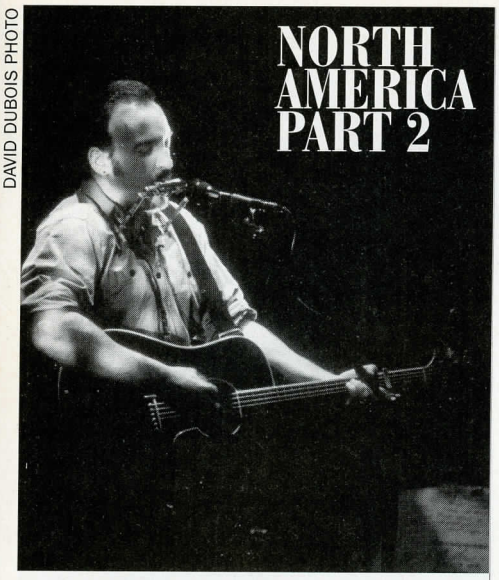
TICKETS: Dump was exactly 46 tickets.

LAURA'S COMMENTS: "The Wish" at the Beacon was a great, great song, which was apparently familiar to the audience members who buy bootlegs. Bruce said he had played it live only once before, but "this being my last show before Christmas...." He said that there aren't that many rock 'n' roll songs about mothers—except by Elvis—and that he's written a lot of songs about his father ("It's a *manly* sort of subject"). After he received his first standing ovation of the evening, he said, "I see we have a bunch of mother lovers here tonight!" Beautiful performance and beautiful song.

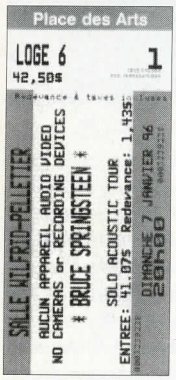
One of the downsides of the concert was the lighting. It was frustrating to be on the main floor for the first—and probably only—time in my life, and not be able to see the expressions on his face because the lighting was so subdued.

The "yahoos" in the audience, one of the worst of whom was in front of me, were also a downer. In spite of Bruce's announcement early on that anyone who clapped or shouted or sang along during the songs would be thrown out by the New Jersey police, people shouted for "Thunder Road" during Bruce's eloquent song introductions, and also screamed "You're the best" and "Broooce" during some of the quiet moments in the songs.

I would like to think that the idealism and compassion that Bruce espouses in his songs would carry over into his fans' lives, but I wonder. I waited outside the stage door with maybe 100 other Bruce fans to get his autograph (he left by another door), and an hour and a half later, when our numbers had dwindled to maybe 12, a homeless man tried to get our attention. I walked over to him to hear what he had to say, and thought that some of the others would follow—after all, we'd just heard Bruce sing and speak eloquently about just this sort of man—but no one followed. He recited from memory a poem he'd written about his life—the line I remember best was about saying hello to people and having them spit on you. The crowd was oblivious to him.—*Laura Adler*



DAVID DUBOIS PHOTO



1/7/96
MONTREAL, QUEBEC
PLACE DES ARTS
CAPACITY: 3200

SET NOTES: Same set list as 12/17, except with "Little Things" instead of "The Wish." In the crowd: Gordon Lightfoot, Paul Molitor.

MORON FACTOR: Bruce didn't start the show by warning the audience to be quiet and the lack of a warning seemed to encourage more fans than usual to yell.

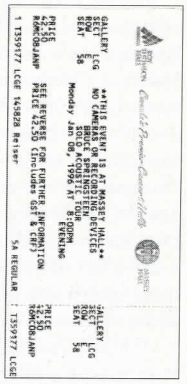
PRESS: "BRUCE GAVE HIS BEST...AND IT WAS GREAT!" Paul Cantin in the *Ottawa Sun*: Throughout the night, Springsteen spoke of "real-life miracles," the small, seemingly insignificant decisions we all make that can change the world for better or worse. It's a theme that runs heavily through his new album—how a sense of hope in our dark world can be found in the unlikeliest places—but he also pulled through his repertoire and liberally reinterpreted older songs with a similar message....What remains unsaid, of course, is that Springsteen himself has become a kind of modern-day Tom Joad. Despite unimagined fame and wealth, he still manages to express a sense of kinship with the desperate and the lonely....

"SOLO SPRINGSTEEN SERVES UP PASSION, PAIN AND ARTISTRY." Mark LePage in the *Montreal Gazette*: Last night's concert found a writer at the top of his game, a singer in full control of his instrument and an artist whose understanding of the paradoxical union of passion and performance has never been more obvious.

SCOTT'S COMMENTS: Bruce was talkative throughout the evening, and quickly endeared himself to the audience with a few words in French. He told a great tale about searching for change for a pay phone in some bar in New Jersey before launching into "Little Things." The story was quite funny and well received, but after Bruce sang the first two lines in the wrong key and had to start over (in his words: "and it was going so well..."), the song never really got going. He finished it up by saying, "That's why this song remains unrecorded!"

I was quite impressed with the amount of time he took to talk about the songs on his new album, and I think this is what really made the show so special. Bruce was also quite upbeat about his songs, despite their dark nature. Before "Sinaloa Cowboys" he told the story about going on a bike trip through the Arizona and California deserts. Recognizing that it was 25 below in Montreal he joked, "It's hard to believe, but these places really do exist!" I think he's a bit more at ease with the album now, and recognizes that his audience appreciates the material for what it's worth. —*Scott Bradley*

1/8/96
TORONTO, ONTARIO
MASSEY HALL
CAPACITY: 2600



1/8 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/Nebraska/Dead Man Walkin'/Little Things/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Spare Parts/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land/My Best

SET NOTES: First tour appearance of "Johnny 99." Bruce noted that he hadn't played the song in ten years. First show of the tour where "Murder Inc." was not played. Earliest appearance of "Dead Man Walkin'" in the set.

The day after the show, Springsteen went to a local Toronto record store, by himself, and spent 90 minutes shopping. He purchased about 70 CDs, among them a Loreena McKennitt import with a bonus live disc (for $50), some Noam Chomsky spoken word CDs, and a Hank Williams 7-CD box set.

MORON FACTOR: A few people called out for "Cadillac Ranch" and "Thunder Road" (to which Bruce replied, "In your dreams, pal"). The biggest moron of the night, who clapped all the way through "Brothers," was admonished a little more severely: "There's somebody out there that feels I need a rhythm section. And I don't want to upset that person, but I want to let them know I have it figured out. Your clapping really fucks me up."

PRESS: "FANS FACE THE BOSS' WRATH." Tim Perlich writes in *Toronto Now*: With shrewd economy, Springsteen set the evening's somber tone, while simultaneously plugging his new product, by leading with a mournful recitation of the "Ghost of Tom Joad." Then, to assure his longtime fans that there is still room in the extended sales pitch for reminiscence with tunes past, he followed with "Adam," which drew one huge sigh of relief from the crowd. Not just because it meant the oldies weren't off-limits but because the song's lyrical content covered all the bets that Bruce couldn't last the night without at least one reference to Cadillacs.

Soon the Boss was back to the business of recounting the hardships of the newly unemployed, Vietnam veterans, prison inmates, and migrant farm workers he's been reading about lately. The two-dimensional, predictable characters who inhabit Bruce's world were no more real in performance....There were also the personalized song introductions that seemed to lose steam each time he got to the part about "manifestation," but they *sounded* sincere, and that's all that counts....

KEVIN'S COMMENTS: Bruce seemed to be in very good spirits last night—a little less serious than in other shows I've seen. His voice seemed a little rough in parts—especially near the beginning—almost like he had a slight cold. "Darkness" stands out as a highlight, he really nailed it.

As with other venues, Toronto "fans" were calling out songs. Some guy in my row yelled out "Johnny 99" and Bruce turned to the side of the stage and said, "Let's play 'Johnny.'" It was a tremendous performance that may have been lost on a lot of the crowd. I suspect that Bruce thought he should continue to mix things up, because he called out "Dead Man" soon after to those at the side of the stage.

Bruce introduced "Little Things" with the pay phone/bar/waitress story. He got to the punch line and silence fell over the audience—they did not get it. He then said half-jokingly, "That's the end of the story." The audience didn't understand the song, either. I've never seen that in any of the other venues I've been to. —*Kevin Jessop*

1/10-11/96
DETROIT, MI
FOX THEATRE
CAPACITY: 4850

1/10 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/Dead Man Walkin'/Nebraska/Sell It (And They Will Come)/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Spare Parts/The Promised Land/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/No Surrender/My Best

1/10 SET NOTES: The world premiere of "Sell It," inspired by late-night infomercials, which Bruce told the crowd he had written on the flight to Detroit. First tour appearance of "No Surrender." The Fox was the biggest hall on the first leg of the tour.

The show stirred some controversy in the press after Springsteen's organization refused to grant review tickets to critics from the *Free Press* and the *Detroit News* (there has been a long and protracted strike by union workers at these papers). The *Free Press* fired back by running a story claiming that some of the t-shirts sold at the show were made overseas by non-union labor.

PRESS: "SPRINGSTEEN'S QUIETEST MOMENTS SPOKE LOUDEST." Susan Whitall in the *Detroit Journal* (the newspaper put

out by striking reporters): Bruce sang from the heart. He also spoke from the heart, offering a stirring, poetic monologue on the newspaper strike that could have been the climax of a Frank Capra movie. His words gave emotional succor to the many strikers in attendance.

"I know how I feel about my own job, how central and life-giving it is to me," said Springsteen. "I can only imagine what it's like to stand up for what you believe in, and know that you may never again work in your city.

"I do know that whatever their faults, unions have been the only powerful and effective voice working people have ever had in the history of this country, and this town knows that more than any other." Then he dedicated the song "The Promised Land" to the strikers.

The artist also urged fans to buy his merchandise, noting that all proceeds would go to the strike fund, "and I'll match whatever is raised." The rocker also donated dozens of free concert tickets to the strikers and allowed the unions to set up an information booth in the lobby....

DANIEL'S COMMENTS: After his "speech" I was amazed at how quiet the crowd was during the songs. I was very happy about that, and Bruce seemed to be too, commenting on it several times. He seemed in a very good mood. Only three times did he respond to audience calls. When a front row fan called again and again for "Rosalita," Bruce said, "Do yourself a favor and save your voice—I ain't gonna play it." A female fan yelled out "I'm on Fire," and Bruce quickly responded, "Yeah, me too." And in response to a male fan's, "I love you, man!" a smiling Bruce responded with, "Thanks—I really like you too."

"Sell It" had little tune, made little sense, and was *hilarious*! Bruce prefaced it with "Be forewarned this is complete idiocy," and ended by saying he would probably never play it again. Really lightened things up as Bruce moved into the more serious sections of the show.—*Daniel Cunningham*

1/11 SET NOTES: Same as 1/10 except replaced the "capital punishment trilogy"—"Johnny 99," "Dead Man Walkin'" and "Nebraska"—with "Murder Inc." and "Mansion on the Hill."

MIKE'S COMMENTS: Bruce played "Sell It" again. One verse went, "And to Dionne (Warwick) and Cher and all my late-night psychic friends/I raise my glass and drink to your health/And to Tony Little, America's Personal Trainer/Please go kill yourself." He played it both nights because, "If you talk to someone who was at the first show and they say, 'Did he play that song he wrote on the airplane?' and you say no, you'll think the first show was better."

A personal note: I hung out after the first show to try to meet Bruce. He came out and signed a few autographs, but I didn't get one. On a hunch I went to the hotel and when Bruce walked out, I asked for his autograph. He asked my name and wrote "To Mike." I told him that I'm a musician and how much his music has meant to me over the years. He said, "Good luck with your music."

At the second show, after "Galveston Bay," Bruce said, "Got a young musician in the audience named Mike. This one's for you, buddy." And he launched into "No Surrender." I cannot express how much this meant to me. Bruce has given me a gift that I will have for the rest of my life. Thank you Bruce, with all of my soul. —*Mike Thompson*

1/12/96 YOUNGSTOWN, OH STAMBAUGH THEATRE
CAPACITY: 2400

SET NOTES: Same as 1/11, except "Youngstown" and "The Promised Land" switched positions. In the crowd: Joe Grushecky, Robert Hilburn, and a film crew from "CBS This Morning."

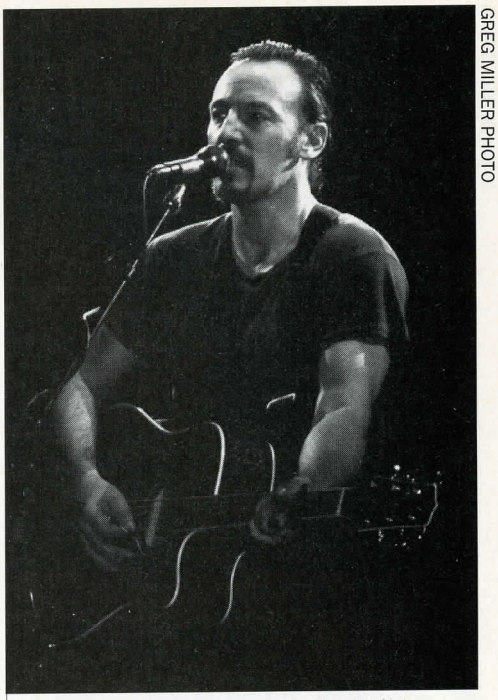
Before "No Surrender," Springsteen read a telegram that he said had been sent by Youngstown local hero Ray "Boom Boom Mancini. "Welcome to Youngstown," Springsteen read. "I wish I was there personally to welcome you, but I'm sure the people are taking good care of you. The people of Youngstown are down-home, solid, earth-type people, the kind you write about in your songs. I'm glad you get to see where I come from and a little bit of who I am—not much different from where you come from. I wish you continued success and Godspeed."

CHRIS'S COMMENTS: Bruce's performance was stellar. Almost every song was a revelation and a definitive performance. I don't think I've ever heard a more passionate version of "Darkness." "Brothers Under the Bridges" and "BUSA" were also highlights. "Sell It" had the crowd roaring with laughter.

In introducing "Youngstown," Bruce commented that it's always difficult to write a song about someone else's hometown and he hoped that he would get it right. The Chamber of Commerce sent him a letter saying that while they appreciated the sentiment, he was depressing people. "The presented me with a basket of goodies," he remarked. The crowd seemed to be very appreciative of the song.

When the encores began everyone stood and remained standing throughout, the first time I've seen that happen on this tour. When he finished "My Best" and the lights came on, people gave him another rousing ovation. Before the show had begun, I had wondered if this atypical audience would "get it." I must have underestimated them, for they certainly got it, probably more than the audiences in the large urban centers he's been playing elsewhere.—*Chris Papaleonardos*

GARY'S COMMENTS: The show was probably the single best performance I have ever witnessed. Bruce was upbeat and chatty all night, poignant and funny. A local Boy Scout troop served as ushers for the show. Bruce commented that this was the first time a troop of Boy Scouts had probably ever been to one of his shows. He then said that he had "only made it to Webelos but then the troop master ran off with some other guy's wife and that ended the whole thing." Sensing, perhaps, that his remarks might me misconstrued by the Boy



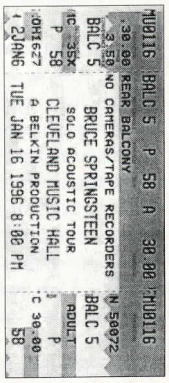
GREG MILLER PHOTO

"HERE DARLIN' IN YOUNGSTOWN": 1/12/96.

Scouts, Bruce quickly added, "Hey, but that was in New Jersey. I'm sure nothing like that happens in Youngstown."

I was able to hang around after the show and meet Bruce. After almost everyone cleared the hall, he chatted with some friends at the front of the stage. Someone asked if he planned on playing Pittsburgh, and Bruce said "definitely." He also said he pretty much planned on playing any place he could find a hall and he didn't sound like he was in any hurry to end this tour.—*Gary D. Benz*

1/16-17/96 CLEVELAND, OH MUSIC HALL
CAPACITY: 3000



1/16 SET NOTES: Same as 1/12.

CHRIS'S COMMENTS: While the set list was identical to Youngstown, the show was not as strong. Bruce seemed a bit tired. Nevertheless, a number of songs stood out, especially "Straight Time," "Across the Border," and "Promised Land." Bruce omitted the harmonica entirely from an otherwise rousing "No Surrender."—*Chris Papaleonardos*

MICHELE'S COMMENTS: Bruce was in extraordinarily great spirits, almost too much so. His set was a standard one, with a great deal of between song chatter. His voice was strong and clear, his playing powerful and dramatic, and technically, he was virtually perfect. But somehow his good mood seemed slightly at odds with so much of the material, as though he was struggling to interject the darkness, so inherent in the music, into his performance.—*Michele Stadnik*

1/17 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/Dead

Man Walkin'/Sell It/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Reason to Believe/Youngstown/The Promised Land/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/No Surrender/My Best

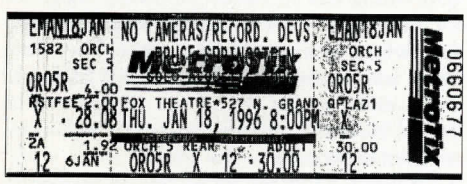
CHRIS'S COMMENTS: Much better show than the first night in Cleveland. He omitted the spoken intro to "Youngstown." "Reason to Believe" made an appearance for the first time in a while, and this time there was less falsetto (hardly any at all). Also no Dylan imitation in "Bus Stop."

Crowd was really pretty good, although perhaps not as quiet as the previous night. "Brothers" once again a highlight. "Adam" was particularly good, as was "Johnny 99." He prefaced "Highway 29" as "probably the only pop song about a shoe salesman." In introducing "Sinaloa Cowboys," he spoke of riding out in California and Arizona, and recalled the first time he ever set foot in Arizona, when he got off the plane in 1975 and it was 116 degrees. "Dry heat," he said knowingly. "Shit, we all ran inside as soon as we arrived. Dry heat my ass, that's what they say, but man was it hot!"—*Chris Papaleonardos*

MICHELE'S COMMENTS: Neither as grim and determined as his Chicago show, nor as joyous as the previous night, the 17th saw him weave a powerful, affecting and spellbinding combination of despair, desperation, and darkness leavened with just the perfect blend of hope, joy and longing.

During a rollicking, rockabilly-guitar version of "Johnny 99," he defiantly snarled "It was more 'n all this, judge, that put that gun in my hands..." then subtly but chillingly changing the final verse to: "Show a little mercy and put me on the killing line!" "Reason to Believe" was again astonishing: Bruce bringing forth so many voices from God knows where, including an ironic and goose-flesh-raising wail to open the song.

My husband, never a Springsteen fan, was intrigued with the first night's performance. But something magical happened on the 17th, unexpected and astonishing—he finally "got it"...and was transformed on that night into a fan! I firmly believe that someday, perhaps many years from now, those who were privileged to have seen this tour will nod condescendingly to the newest group of zealots and say knowingly, "Yeah, he's great now, but ahh, you shoulda seen him in 1995!"—*Michele Stadnik*



1/18/96
ST. LOUIS, MO
FOX THEATRE
CAPACITY: 4,500

1/18 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/Nebraska/Sell It/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Youngstown/The Promised Land/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/No Surrender/My Best

SET NOTES: Same set as 1/17 except no "Dead Man" or "Reason to Believe." Also on the set list but not played were "Murder Inc." and "Spare Parts."

PRESS: "DOWNBEAT AND DYNAMITE." Harper Barnes in the *Post Dispatch*: As a whole, the concert demonstrated that, in addition to being one of the most exciting live performers in the rock business, Springsteen is also the rightful heir to a tradition of populist troubadours that includes Dylan and stretches back to Woody Guthrie.

JEN'S COMMENTS: Bruce was actually pretty interactive with the crowd all evening. He spent a good deal of time scooting his chair around before settling down for the "Border Suite," grinning as he explained that he just can't play if his chair isn't in the same place every time. When we laughed at this, he added, "I wish I was kidding." He chuckled and exclaimed something like "It's amazing how bizarrely important it is to get the right position!" A woman in the balcony derived a higher (or lower?) meaning from this and whooped her approval, which made Bruce laugh for a long time and then jokingly invite her to come onstage and demonstrate.—*Jen Brown*

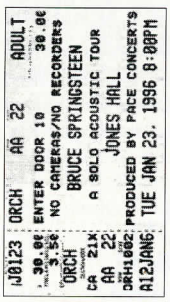
1/22/96
NEW ORLEANS, LA
THE SAENGOR CENTER
CAPACITY: 2300

SET NOTES: The show was filmed for the "Dead Man Walkin'" video. In the crowd: Patti Scialfa, Tim Robbins, Michelle Shocked, and Sister Helen Prejean, the New Orleans nun who wrote the book upon which the movie "Dead Man Walking" is based. After the show, Bruce came back onstage to chat with remaining audience members, something he would do occasionally as the tour progressed.

PRESS: "BUMMED IN THE USA." Christopher Rose in the *Times-Picayune*: Where have you gone, Rosalita? The question passed the lips of a few folks after Springsteen's slick, solo and decidedly downbeat performance. Now, the characters of Springsteen's stories are dark and forbidding, brooding and unlucky.... Springsteen's "Bummed in the USA" tour is a heartfelt, introspective, thoroughly vital and necessary walk through the American heartland, warts and all. How bleak can a show get? So bleak that it took "Streets of Philadelphia," a song about a man dying of AIDS, to perk up the audience at the end of the night.... Oddly, super-success, riches, a wife, kids and all the Harleys a man can buy have not stripped away Springsteen's angst. In fact, they seem to have exacerbated it. "I have learned to accept myself as a total stranger," he told the crowd, one of many self-deprecating, at times awkward, exchanges between songs....It was, after three hours, another memorable performance by the most articulate inarticulate man in America, a night of "aw, shucks" asides and intricately detailed portraits of the loss of innocence and the strained reach of promises.

WILFRED'S NOTES: "Dead Man Walkin'" has been getting a lot of attention here since Helen Prejean does her work at Angola, which is a couple hours from here, so dedicating "Dead Man" to her was virtually a local gesture. Changing the last lines of "Johnny 99" to "Show me some mercy and put me on that killing line" was a shock. Bruce put the Dylan spin on the "newly discovered lovers of the everglades" line rather than the "mongrel nymphs" line. Maybe because we're nearer the swamps? Overall, the show struck me as very well set up and arranged, very tight.

There were a few hardcore tramps in the crowd but mostly they seemed to be people who hadn't seen Bruce in a long time (he hasn't played here since the '70s). One guy didn't even know about the new album and was looking at the CD booklet I had with me in hopes of an autograph. There was *zero* publicity here and this guy had just driven by the theater and saw that Bruce was coming. He stopped, went in, and got an 18th row ticket. There were several stories like that.—*Wilfred Major*



1/23/96
HOUSTON, TX
JONES HALL
CAPACITY: 2400

1/23 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Nebraska/Sell It/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Spare Parts/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land/My Best

PRESS: "RICH MAN, POOR MAN." Rick Mitchell in the *Houston Chronicle*: While Clinton debated the issues before a national television audience, Springsteen delivered his own State of the Union address. The last of the old-fashioned rock 'n' roll heroes didn't concern himself with abstract figures on how to balance the budget. His songs chronicled the lives of those who are taxed to the limit just to survive....The album includes "Galveston Bay," based on the true story of a clash between Vietnamese immigrants and native Texan shrimpers. The first time Springsteen sang the title, the crowd cheered. Nobody was cheering by the time he brought up the Texas Klan....

DOUG'S COMMENTS: The first time is always best, I think. I saw this show in Chicago, and the Houston crowd was very loud. There was a lot of hootin' and hollerin' at all the wrong times. If it bothered Bruce he didn't let it show. After the show I had the good fortune of actually meeting Bruce. He was incredible. We talked for just a few seconds and he autographed a picture I brought along. Someday I will die a happy man.—*Doug Jones*

STEVEN'S COMMENTS: Hearing

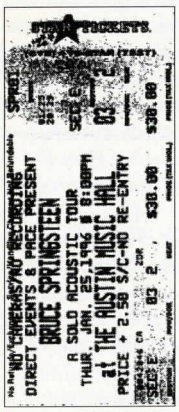
"Galveston Bay" in south Texas was especially poignant. Bruce recalled taking a train to play at Liberty Hall in 1974. His reference to Liberty Hall in "This Hard Land" drew a loud roar from the crowd.—*Steven Thomson*

RON'S COMMENTS: My overall impression was that Bruce was at ease and really enjoying himself. The rowdy Texans didn't disrupt his concentration.

A great personal experience for me was the donation of merchandise revenues to the food pantry that I volunteer for. I had sent a letter telling about our work, and I got a call with great news: the donation, info table, and free tickets. Little did I know we'd be invited backstage to visit with Bruce! Some highlights:

He wanted to play the Opera House in Galveston (1000 seats) but "the fans in Houston, Dalls and Austin have been so loyal," he couldn't do it "...this leg." He said he wants to play in Fresno, Stockton and Galveston, "where the music takes place." He was really floored by his experience in Youngstown, talking at length about the sense of community and seeing the effect of the song on their faces. "These people lived the song...it was their fathers, brothers or grandfathers I was singing about." He said he spent the next day touring the abandoned steel mills with the authors of *Journey to Nowhere.*

The most interesting impression came from the seven novice fans I was with. They found Bruce to be a very open, genuine and caring person, and it was neat to see their reaction. —*Ron Boster*



1/25/96 AUSTIN, TX MUSIC HALL
CAPACITY: 1800

1/25 SET: Tom Joad/ Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Nebraska/Sell It/Brothers Under the Bridges/ Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Spare Parts/ Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/ Streets Of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/No Surrender/My Best/Blowin' Down the Road (with Joe Ely)

SET NOTES: First show of the tour not to end with "My Best" and the first show of the tour to feature a guest. After the show, Bruce visited Willie Nelson.

RON'S COMMENTS: The Austin Music Hall was a strange place—concrete floors and folding chairs (normally it's a no-seat general admission venue), and smoking is allowed. Kind of a big warehouse-style nightclub. They put a sound curtain in the back and the exposed insulation served as the sound proofing. But it was the best sound of the shows I've seen—one could hear every nuance of Bruce's voice, harmonica and guitar.

Bruce talked about a new law dealing with homeless in Austin. He talked about how his parents took out all their savings to move to California. During the three days traveling they slept in a motel once and in their car twice. He said under this law, they would have been arrested.—*Ron Boster*

DOUGLAS H. HEATH PHOTO

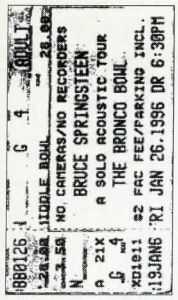
BILL'S COMMENTS: At the end of "My Best," Bruce made no motion of leaving and a roadie in the back could be seen holding the curtain open for someone. Saying that there are many singer-songwriters from Texas that he's felt a kinship with for years, Bruce asked the crowd to give a warm welcome for Joe.

The choice of "Blowin' Down the Road" had everyone scratching their heads. Over the years, this traditional tune has turned into "Goin Down the Road, Feelin' Bad" (as done by the Grateful Dead), but this rendition was much truer to the Woody Guthrie recording "Blowin' Down the Road (I Ain't Going to be Treated This Way)." Bruce and Joe sang around one mic and extended the chorus.

"Brothers" was prefaced with an acknowledgment of Austin's new "No Camping" ordinance, which coincidentally took effect on the day of the show. Bruce accurately translated the intent of the ordinance by asking the rhetorical question, "With thousands of homeless people here in Austin, and, from what I understand, just over 100 beds, where are these people supposed to stay? Obviously, somewhere else."—*Bill Saunders*

TOM'S COMMENTS: Bruce has always had strong ties to Austin, and once again he mentioned the old Armadillo World Headquarters, where he played back in 1974. The entire show was amazing. "Darkness" was a highlight as he didn't pound the strings as much as he had in Houston—the hall was so small he didn't need the volume.—*Tom Friedrich*

JOSH'S COMMENTS: "Sell It" proved to be both a highlight and a low. While it was the one song that I had not yet heard, it proved to be even less than I had imagined. Bruce's musical humor seems to have reached its peak at the Christic shows and nothing since has come close.—*Josh Jacobson*

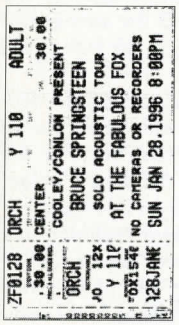


1/26
DALLAS, TX
BRONCO BOWL
CAPACITY: 3000

SET NOTES: Same set as 1/25 except he dropped "Blowin' Down the Road" and "Nebraska" but added "Mansion on the Hill" and "State Trooper" (for the first time on the tour) in the "Nebraska" slot. The venue is part of a bowling alley; Bruce remarked, "I'm going to play nothin' but bowling alleys from here on out."

HENRY'S COMMENTS: The crowd was pretty wild, shouting a lot between songs and applauding during the song once they figured out what it was. Bruce wasn't quite as on as he was in Austin, and seemed a bit tired. He introduced "State Trooper" by saying "a guy out back asked me to play this." It was a great version with classic Bruce screaming the last verses.—*Henry Schaffer*

JOSH'S COMMENTS: Solid but not spectacular. The highlight of the show was "State Trooper," with Bruce generating a siren-type sound from his harmonica at the end of the song.—*Josh Jacobson*



1/28/96
ATLANTA, GA
FOX THEATRE
CAPACITY: 4000

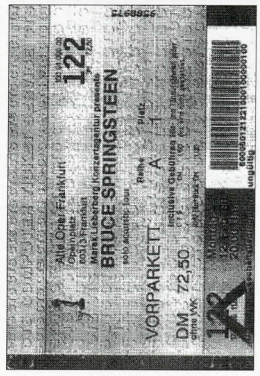
SET NOTES: Same set as 1/26 except he did "Nebraska" instead of "State Trooper" and "Mansion."

PRESS: "PLUGS INTO NATION'S LONGINGS." Steve Dollar in the *Atlanta Journal/Constitution*: Aware that many in his audience chose to spend Super Bowl Sunday away from their TV sets, Bruce wanted to show his appreciation. "Welcome sports fans," Springsteen began. "The revolution begins here." The song cycle, interspersed with rearranged versions of concert favorites such as "Adam" and "Born in the USA," plays like a dour sequel to *Nebraska*. If some tunes, like the crime caper tragedy "Highway 29," unfold as if generic pulp fictions, most are efforts to embody and embrace a populace that scrapes at the economic margins. What made the performance work, gave lift and credibility to the material, was the intimacy Springsteen sought with the audience, using between-song chatter to crack irreverent jokes, often at his own expense, and conjure a folksy charisma. This was your neighborhood drinking buddy, making a state of the union address.

STEVE'S COMMENTS: This was the first show of the tour I'd seen and I was blown away by his ability to change the mood of the entire audience. "Across the Border" reaffirmed my belief that it is the best song he has released in years. The crowd behaved well for the most part. One guy yelled out, "I love you," to which Bruce joked, "That guy's been following me around for years."—*Steve Dittmore*

JOSH'S COMMENTS: The fair number of obnoxious fans didn't seem to faze Bruce. Somewhere between Red Bank and Atlanta, Bruce learned to work through the crowd noise. A strong performance, along with frequent Super Bowl updates ("Troy Aikman has been arrested"), made for an enjoyable end to the U.S. leg of the tour.—*Josh Jacobson*

EUROPE



2/12/96
FRANKFURT, GERMANY
ALTE OPERA
CAPACITY: 2500

2/12 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/ Straight Time/Highway 29/ Darkness/Murder Inc./Nebraska/Little Things/Brothers Under the Bridges/ Born in the USA/ Dry Lightning/ Spare Parts/Youngstown/ Sinaloa Cowboys/ The Line/Balboa Park/ Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/No Surrender/My Best

SET NOTES: Bruce even spoke some German including a running gag: "this song is about *maenner und frauen*" (men and women). After the show Bruce did a long interview with VH1 UK, which also filmed seven songs at the concert. In the crowd: Wolfgang Niedecken (who played with Bruce in Berlin for the "Hungry Heart" video), to whom Bruce dedicated "This Hard Land."

ALFONSO'S COMMENTS: My dream came true—I saw Bruce solo and acoustic. I also was upgraded to front row tickets! Bruce was in a very good mood and was very amusing with the crowd. He played "No Surrender" by a request. After the show, he came down to the front of the stage to shake hands and sign autographs. It was a very good show, one of the best I've seen.—*Alfonso Augelli*

2/14/96
DRESDEN, GERMANY
KULTURPALAST
CAPACITY: 2400

SET NOTES: Same set as 2/12 except Bruce does a third encore of "Promised Land," only the second time in the tour the show has gone on past "My Best."

MARIO'S COMMENTS: Scalpers sold tickets for about 100 DM ($70; list priced 77 DM). And there were only a few people searching for tickets. Well-behaved audience—almost no clapping during the songs—but a lot of flashlights. Bruce asked them to stop but not all did. During "My Best" a lot of people left their seats and filled the aisles near the stage. At the end almost everyone was standing. The hall lights were still on and, after shaking lots of hands and "collecting" lots of flowers from the audience, Bruce went right back to his guitar and played "The Promised Land" without any light show.—*Mario Hoffmann*

JORG'S COMMENTS: Bruce seemed a little bit ill. You could hear it on "Youngstown." But during "No Surrender," the crowd began clapping and a smile came on Bruce's face.—*Jorg Mehlow*

2/15/96
MUNICH, GERMANY
RUDI-SEDIMEYER-HALLE
CAPACITY: 3300

SET NOTES: Same set as 2/13 but without " No Surrender" and "Promised Land."

PRESS: "BACK TO THE ROOTS." Markus Vanhoefer in *Munchener Merkur* (translated by Frank Wallmeier): Can you trust a singer who is one of the highest-paid men in the business? Springsteen, the folk troubadour with the politically correct look, wants people to listen to him....He is at his best when he mixes authentic things with rock-clichés, when he picks up the American way of life, to show the gap between reality and appearance. Then you are inclined to believe that it's Bruce, the saint, not Bruce, the hypocrite.

"THE MARATHON NARRATOR." Eike-Clemens Kullmannin the *Oberoesterreichische Nachrichten* (translated by Robert Staedter): One has to really like Bruce Springsteen to be able to applaud enthusiastically at this concert. The hall was packed, which can't be said of the stage. On his tour the Boss proves one thing above all: Light and show are not necessary to successfully arrange a live concert....The star himself likes to laugh. For example, when he asks for the translation of an English word ["male bonding"] and the only reaction is a loud "Springsteen". By this hearty laughing, Bruce shows that also in his role as rock star he has not lifted into higher spheres. Finally, at the end, he becomes a hero who can be touched, when the Boss shakes raised hands for farewell.

FRANK'S COMMENTS: The audience kept very quiet and listened closely until the encores. But when Bruce came back for "Bus Stop," they rushed the stage and clapped along.—*Frank Wallmeier*

ROBERT'S COMMENTS: Before Bruce

DOUGLAS H. HEATH PHOTO

appeared on stage, the audience was asked to remain in their seats and to leave them only between songs. People who stood up in the short period between this speech and the beginning of the show were asked (or even forced) by security to sit down again. The air conditioning was turned on during the show and produced an annoying background noise.

The intro to "Little Things" started with "This next song is a song I never recorded. You'll see why in a minute."—*Robert Staedter*

KATRIN'S COMMENTS: My feelings during the concert were mixed. There were times when I sat back listening to Bruce do "Youngstown" and thought how intense and intimate this was. Sitting in a small, dark room with the only light being onstage on Bruce made me feel very close to him. Since he lightened up the show with stories and jokes, it was very entertaining during the first hour. In the second half when he sat down and sang five new songs in a row, the crowd became a bit restless.—*Katrin Schlemmer*

2/17/96 HAMBURG, GERMANY CCH HALLE 1

CAPACITY: 2500

2/17 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Mansion on the Hill/Dead Man Walkin'/Sell It/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Reason to Believe/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/My Best//The Promised Land

SET NOTES: Like on 2/14, Bruce brings out a final encore of "Promised Land." First European "Dead Man." The hall was also the site of Bruce's first German show back in April of 1981.

PRESS: The *Hamburger Abendblatt*: "The best show in 1996 in Hamburg."

STEFAN'S COMMENTS: Before the show we heard that Bruce was staying in the Atlantic Hotel, so we went there. Bruce's bodyguard came out and told us to all go outside and that Bruce wouldn't be able to sign anything. Suddenly Bruce comes out of the door and started to sign everything. I realized that he was singing while he was giving the autographs. His voice was so clear and brilliant! I don't really remember, because I was so excited, but I think it was "Tom Joad"! He entered the car, his bodyguard followed, and the car disappeared.

At the show itself, my personal highlights were: "Darkness," great guitar play, great power; "Born in the USA," if you don't know the words, you wouldn't recognize the song; "Youngstown," wonderful atmosphere; "Streets of Philly," the best version I have ever heard! For "The Promised Land" the lights were on, everybody was standing and clapping during the song.—*Stefan Rathmann*

RALF'S COMMENTS: After the show some fans talked to Landau who told them that the third leg of the tour had yet to be finalized. He was interested in our complaints about the distribution of tickets, and noted that they only reserve the first two rows for themselves. He also said that no one was upset with the audience behavior in Munich (well, I still see it the other way), and that they were thinking about finishing the tour at the Waldbuhne in Berlin! Bruce solo, acoustic at an open amphitheater with 20,000 seats!—*Ralf Dismann*

2/18/96 DUSSELDORF, GERMANY PHILIPSHALLE

CAPACITY: 4500

2/18 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Nebraska/Sell It/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Reason to Believe/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/No Surrender/My Best

SET NOTES: "Mansion" and "Sell It" replace "Nebraska" and "Little Things."

MORON FACTOR: A louder crowd than the other German shows. One woman clapped during "Nebraska" and others held up lighters during some of the quieter songs. After "Across the Border," the crowd rushed the stage and the crowd was loud from that point on.

WILCO'S COMMENTS: The Philipshalle is far from being intimate. It has a capacity of about 5000, which is too much for a show like this. Still, Bruce pulled off a good show and the audience behaved fairly well. The songs from the new album are sparkling during a show; the only song I didn't think was that great was "Youngstown." It didn't work for me, I thought it was too slow.—*Wilco Schepen*

HANS AND ERIK'S COMMENTS: The hall is named after the electronics manufacturer. Some fans who had not bought the new CD yet brought American flags to hang up. Before the show, the hall manager announced that "Bruce is not a jukebox." During the show, the crowd was very noisy.—*Hans van Os and Erik van Roovert*

2/20/96 SANREMO, ITALY SANREMO FESTIVAL ARISTON THEATRE

SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad.

NOTES: In a controversial move, Bruce plays at Italy's Sanremo Festival, which one fan describes as the Italian equivalent of "Star Search." This multi-day, televised event usually has viewers vote on the best performers. Bruce is not voted on and was one of the few foreign performers ever to play this affair.

PRESS: "SHIVER SPRINGSTEEN, THE REST IS SANREMO." *La Republica*: A slap of great poetry, a high point, that for several minutes took us far away and reminded us of the real world. To many people the contrast seemed almost unbelievable.

PAOLA'S COMMENTS: The Festival is run by Pippo Baudo, the artistic director of state TV, and he would sell you toothpaste or atomic bombs with the same enthusiastic smile. This is more a social event than a music festival, and since tickets are so expensive, it usually features a parade of fur coats, jewels and Armani evening dresses. The festival represents an open contradiction to the themes of the last album.—*Paola Grazioli*

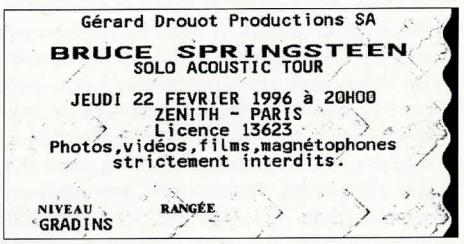
RICCARDO'S COMMENTS: Bruce played for the first time on Italian television. And he couldn't have chosen a worse forum to be involved with. This festival is watched by up to 20 million television viewers (and remember, Italy only has a population of 55 million). But the players of the festival are mostly old and forgotten singers, artists that come back after years of silence (this time, one of the singers hadn't recorded anything for the past 20 years).

The word was that Bruce and his management had put a few conditions on the show: no interviews, nobody onstage with him, and he had sent a sampler of how he wanted to be filmed.

The result was both an unforgettable and unbelievable moment: The shining and bright festival darkened, and Bruce standing there with one spotlight. He sang one of the most hard and struggling songs ever written (in the most crazy contrast you can imagine with the setting). The camera angles were what Bruce had requested: long, close shots that exalted the harshness of the song and the strength of the performance. It was a slap in the face to the festival.

There was also a moment, during the second refrain, when he forgot the words for an instant and played another four beats of the song. But this moment gave the song a power and sincerity usually banished on this stage.

In the end, while the crowd exploded in a standing ovation, he whispered "Grazie, Italia," and moved to go away but the M.C. came onstage, shook his hand (breaking the conditions previously set). But Springsteen was clearly keeping his distance from the false world. Imagine the "Thank you for inviting me to your party" speech from the Oscars. And when the stage lights went on again, and the insane festival began again, everyone understood the difference. And Bruce had regained the dignity he had seemed to have lost.—*Riccardo Marcante*



2/21-22/96 PARIS, FRANCE THE ZENITH

CAPACITY: 6000

SET NOTES: Same set as 2/18 except Bruce doesn't do "No Surrender" or "Sell It" and instead does "Little Things," and he finishes the night off with a third encore, "The Promised Land." In the crowd: Elliot Murphy.

PETER'S COMMENTS: When Bruce

came onstage he was in a very good mood. I could detect an almost invisible smile on his face. He was joking a lot and tried his best French, actually very good for an American. "Fun, eh sex. C'est tres complice, c'est tres difficile," he joked a few times. The highlight of the first night was certainly "Reason to Believe." That song put all the other songs in the shadow and the crowd went nuts. When "Across the Border" was over people rushed the stage and Bruce even seemed pleased. He broke a string on "Bus Stop," but that didn't stop him. After "My Best" Bruce began shaking hands as he was leaving the stage, but halfway down the line, he ran back to the mic stand and sang "Promised Land." When Bruce finally left the stage, people remained in the hall for 40 minutes screaming and crying for more. Security finally threw everyone out.—*Peter Inghelbrecht*

2/22 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Mansion on the Hill/Little Things/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Spare Parts/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/No Surrender//The Promised Land

2/22 SET NOTES: First show of the tour not to include "My Best." "Sell It" was on the set list, but after telling a story about infomercials and asking the crowd if they had them in France, Bruce said "fuck it," and went into "Little Things" instead. After "Adam" he asked the crowd to "crush those little flashing cameras under their feet," but when flashes continued he was angry.

PETER'S COMMENTS: After the previous night expectations were high, but the crowd reacted differently. I had the feeling that people were just waiting for the encores. Bruce must also have noticed because his stories were shorter. During both "The Line" and "Balboa Park," people began to try to sneak down front. The second that "Border" was finished, it seemed like the entire crowd rushed the stage. The security guards were knocked over, and the pushing was even worse than at an E Street Band concert. Bruce clearly didn't like it. Many of the people near the stage had cameras. Springsteen finally gave in and did a rushed version of "No Surrender," which was the highlight of the night. During "Promised Land" I saw Jon Landau standing in the wings and he seemed to be having a good time. The strange thing was, Bruce never did "My Best." I guess he didn't like the crowd, or just wanted to shorten the show.—*Peter Inghelbrecht*

BROADCAST NEWS

At the same time that Springsteen was going from town to town to play small theaters, he also managed a pretty extensive tour of the airwaves. The major Boss television event of recent months was the unveiling of the "Blood Brothers" documentary (which was detailed in the last issue of *Backstreets*), but Springsteen's radio and television appearances in support of *Tom Joad* began back on the first night of the solo acoustic tour.

11/21/95

COLUMBIA RECORDS RADIO HOUR (PART ONE): The first part of the Columbia Record Radio Hour's two-part Springsteen special. Radio broadcast via satellite, part one featured an interview by Bob Costas, with *Tom Joad* album tracks interspersed.

11/27/95

THE TONIGHT SHOW: On the afternoon of the second L.A. show, Springsteen performed "The Ghost of Tom Joad" at the taping for the "Tonight Show with Jay Leno"—Bruce's first appearance on the program—which was broadcast that night.

12/14/95

FRANK SINATRA TRIBUTE: Taped on 11/19/95, Sinatra's 80th birthday party was held at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. Springsteen was on hand to open the event with "Angel Eyes" and to help close it with an all-star "New York, New York."

COLUMBIA RECORDS RADIO HOUR (PART TWO): An hour of live material from Bruce's two shows at the Tower Theater several days earlier: Tom Joad/Straight Time/Darkness/Born in the USA/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/Balboa Park/Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia.

LATE NIGHT WITH DAVID LETTERMAN: On his "day off" between the New York and Boston stops on his tour, Springsteen performed "Youngstown" at the Ed Sullivan Theater. Broadcast that night, this was Springsteen's third appearance on Letterman's show (though only his second on CBS's "Late Night"). CHARLOTTE AND ANTHONY'S COMMENTS: We managed to get two standbys, and one of us got into the show (if you hear a loud scream when Bruce is introduced, that's Charlotte). A few Bruce fans in the audience, some from Europe. There were no other performances other than what you saw on television, but "Youngstown" was excellent.

1/21/96

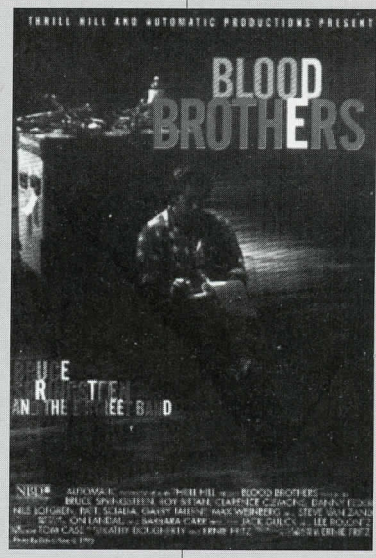
60 MINUTES: Featured interviews with Springsteen and his mother. Performance footage from 11/22/95 included brief snippets of the following: "The Ghost of Tom Joad" and "Youngstown" from the show, "Atlantic City" from soundcheck, and a backstage run-through of "Streets of Philadelphia."

1/22/96

CBS THIS MORNING: A much more in-depth look at the themes explored on *Tom Joad* than the "60 Minutes" segment the night before. Focus on Youngstown—including footage from Springsteen's 1/12 concert there—and *Journey to Nowhere*. Featured a complete, uncut performance of "Youngstown" from 1/12.

2/5/96

MTV: The video for "Dead Man Walkin'" has its world premiere. Directed by Tim Robbins, the video intercuts scenes from the film with footage from Springsteen's acoustic performance of the song (including live vocal) in New Orleans, 1/22/96.



2/20/96

SANREMO FESTIVAL: Springsteen made a quick stop in Italy to play "The Ghost of Tom Joad," which was part of the festival broadcast on Italian television. Bruce's participation sparked much controversy, to say the least (see tour report).

2/23/96

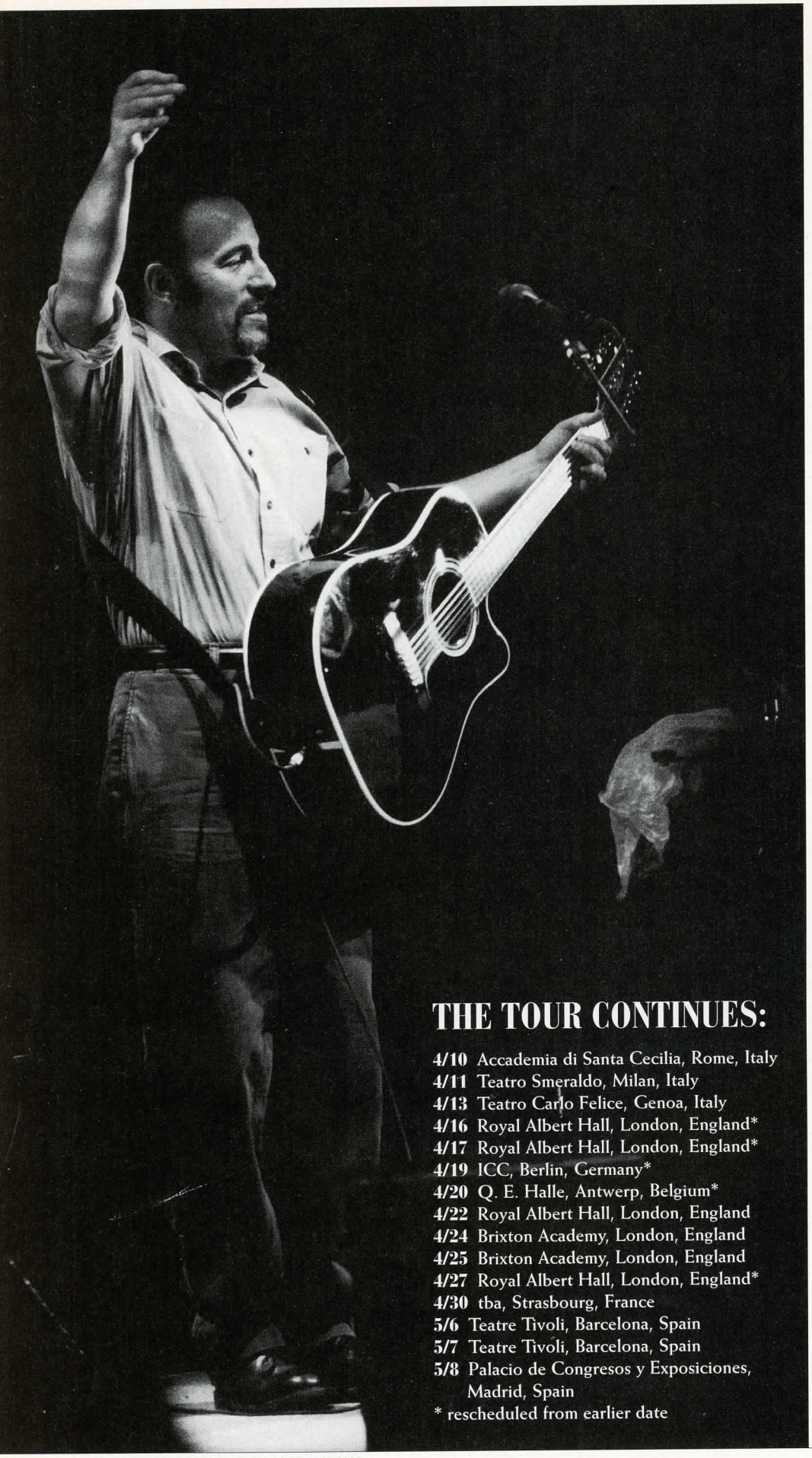
NULLE PART AILLEURS: The day following the second Paris show, Springsteen made his first ever appearance on live French television, playing "Tom Joad." The show was on Canal Plus, during the daily "Nulle Part Ailleurs" program. Springsteen also answered a few questions from the host Antoine DeCaunes.

3/3/96

BLOOD BROTHERS: The documentary, which aired earlier in Europe, had its U.S. premiere on the Disney Channel and ran several times in March. *Blood Brothers* was immediately followed by "New York City '95," 30 minutes of Springsteen and the E Street Band's performance at Sony Studios on 4/5/95. This broadcast included more footage than VH-1's from the same show, with complete performances of the following: Blood Brothers/Murder Inc./This Hard Land/Secret Garden/Streets of Philadelphia/Two Hearts/Thunder Road.

3/25/96

ACADEMY AWARDS: Springsteen performed the Oscar-nominated "Dead Man Walkin'" at the 68th annual Academy Awards ceremony in Los Angeles. Bruce was introduced by Winona Ryder, and his band for the occasion reportedly included Roy Bittan, Danny Federici, Gary Mallabar, and Jim Hanson.



DOUGLAS H. HEATH PHOTO

THE TOUR CONTINUES:

4/10 Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome, Italy
4/11 Teatro Smeraldo, Milan, Italy
4/13 Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa, Italy
4/16 Royal Albert Hall, London, England*
4/17 Royal Albert Hall, London, England*
4/19 ICC, Berlin, Germany*
4/20 Q. E. Halle, Antwerp, Belgium*
4/22 Royal Albert Hall, London, England
4/24 Brixton Academy, London, England
4/25 Brixton Academy, London, England
4/27 Royal Albert Hall, London, England*
4/30 tba, Strasbourg, France
5/6 Teatre Tivoli, Barcelona, Spain
5/7 Teatre Tivoli, Barcelona, Spain
5/8 Palacio de Congresos y Exposiciones, Madrid, Spain
* rescheduled from earlier date

2/25/96
ROTTERDAM, HOLLAND
DE DOELEN
CAPACITY: 1900

SET NOTES: Same set as 2/18. Even though this was a smaller hall, tickets were still available and no scalpers were sighted.

PRESS: "WHAT AN IMPRESSION THE MAN MAKES." Gijsbert Kamer in *The Volkskrant*(translated by Joost Carpay):...Howling like a wolf and gently whispering, he gave his recent songs more dynamics than on the record. The high point was the four songs about life on the American-Mexican border. Springsteen seated himself for this opportunity and became a real storyteller. Chilling stories performed chillingly. Whereas many singer-songwriters start to bore after an hour, two hours of Springsteen weren't enough to satisfy the hunger for more. He's still got it.

ROB'S COMMENTS: The crowd was great, and noise was limited to some applause at the start of some songs. Early in the show they busted some people who were using flash photography.

I was impressed with the Border set. I've visited the San Diego area years ago, and 'seeing' it in a different light really left an impression on me. Personally, I love it when he tells stories, and he didn't let me down one bit. "No Surrender" was a real crowd pleaser. At the start of the last choruses he stopped playing and let the audience sing. Bruce seemed to enjoy himself. He was laughing a lot and talking Dutch ("*Alles kits?*"—it means as much as "How's it hangin'"). The only thing I was disappointed about is that he didn't play "Little Things," which I was really looking forward to hearing. —*Rob van Oostrum*

2/26/96
AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND
THE CARRE THEATRE
CAPACITY: 1800

2/26 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/Mansion on the Hill/Little Things/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Spare Parts/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Bobby Jean/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land

SET NOTES: Tour premiere of "Bobby Jean." Bruce also does a different arrangement on "Promised Land." "Dead Man Walkin'" was on the set list but Bruce played "Streets of Philadelphia" in its place. First show of the tour to not include either "Bus Stop" or "Blinded."

HANS'S COMMENTS: Bruce was excited about the venue, which was very intimate. He asked the crowd not to rush the stage, and security was standing in front of the stage to send people back if necessary. The audience was very quiet. With no crowd at his feet, the encores were more focused. "The Promised Land" was done in a slow version with Bruce only tapping with his hand on the guitar. He finished the song with the same vocal work he used as in "Galveston Bay." It was breathtaking! —*Hans van Os*

2/28/96
MANCHESTER, ENGLAND
APOLLO
CAPACITY: 1826

SET NOTES: Same set as 2/26, except "Sell It" replaces "Little Things," and "Does This Bus Stop" is back in. Bruce adds a minor lyric change to "Highway 29." "She wasn't saying nothing," becomes "She was a rag doll."

PRESS: "CUT TO THE BONE." David Sinclair in the *Times*: For Springsteen, once the very acme of stadium rock, the mid-life switch has involved a return to the simplest of folk music... The performances themselves were pulled with a low-key fervor from the bottom of his heart and, if the tunes were dour and one-dimensional, the words would have stood up in a poetry reading....If ever there was an example of a songwriter reclaiming the fruits of his labor, this was it. And, by applying himself to the fundamentals of his craft, Bruce has recaptured a chunk of the early magic as well.

NIGEL'S COMMENTS: The highlight for me was the way he played "The Promised Land." By using the guitar body for percussion and practically hitting all strings at the same time to get a chord, he broke the lyrics down with a pause after each line.—*Nigel Dyer*

MIKE'S COMMENTS: The highlight for me was "Darkness," which was stunning. I thought Bruce was going to snap his guitar in two, he was playing it that hard. Blew me away. Also "Johnny 99," which was played just as powerfully as "Darkness." "Sell it" went over fantastically with the audience.—*Mike Gorton*

2/29/96
BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND
SYMPHONY HALL
CAPACITY: 2234

2/29 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./ Nebraska/Dead Man Walkin'/Sell It/Little Things/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/ Reason to Believe/ Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Does This Bus Stop/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land

SET NOTES: With 19 songs, this is the longest pre-encore set in Europe to date, matching only Detroit, 1/10. The first show where Bruce played both "Sell It" and "Little Things."

GRAHAM'S COMMENTS: Bruce's stories were all superb, even if nobody got the tequila joke. He offered the audience a choice of songs about sex or television during the set. Television actually won, so a surprised and amused Bruce changed guitars and sang "Sell It." After a request from the audience, he did "Little Things" too.—*Graham Steer*

3/2/96
NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND
CITY HALL

3/2 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Mansion on the Hill/Dead Man Walkin'/Sell It/Little Things/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Reason to Believe/ Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Bobby Jean/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land

SET NOTES: Same set as 2/29 except "Mansion" replaces "Nebraska," and "Bobby Jean" replaces "Bus Stop."

3/3/96
EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND
THE PLAYHOUSE
CAPACITY: 3000

3/3 SET: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/ Nebraska/The Wish/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Reason to Believe/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/ The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border// Bobby Jean/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land

SET NOTES: The first European appearance of "The Wish." Bruce introduces it by saying, "You need big balls to sing a song about your mother, and I've got 'em!" There's also a lyric change: "I got a girl of my own now ma, we're doing okay," changes to "I got a wife of my own now ma, I proposed to her on your birthday."

PETE'S COMMENTS: The Playhouse is currently hosting "The Phantom of the Opera." They couldn't take down the set for that show for a one night stand so it stayed up. Gold figures lined the outside of the stage to the roof, gave a bit of a gothic look to the show. Before "The Wish" he went into his "Mother loving" speech. Scotland lost the Grand Slam on Saturday to England, a gutting experience. Bruce commented on how he had seen so many people drunk yesterday and how we must all be great mother-lovers. "When you're that drunk, the only person you can go home to is your mother," he said.

At one point someone shouted, "You're the Boss." Bruce replied, "that's idiotic and makes me sick."—*Pete Lambie*

3/13/96
STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
CIRKUS

SET NOTES: Same as 3/2 except "Sell It" and "Little Things" change positions.

3/14/96
OSLO, NORWAY
SPEKTRUM

SET NOTES: Same as 3/3 except Bruce played "Murder Inc." instead of "Johnny 99."

3/16/96
COPENHAGEN, DENMARK
FALKONER

SET NOTES: Tom Joad/Adam/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./ Nebraska/The Wish/Little Things/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Spare Parts/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/ The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border// Bobby Jean/This Hard Land/Streets of Philadelphia//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land

3/17/96
DUBLIN, IRELAND
MEAN FIDDLER

SET NOTES: A surprise appearance with Joe Ely for six songs at Ely's show. Dublin seems to be their city of choice—they guested at each other's gigs here back in May, 1993—and on this St. Patrick's Day Springsteen joined Ely again: All Just to Get to You/Oh Boy/Settle For Love/Fingernails/Long Tall Sally/Blowin' Down the Road. The two last played "Blowin' Down the Road" on 1/25 when Ely guested at Springsteen's show in Austin.

3/19/96
BELFAST, IRELAND
KING'S HALL

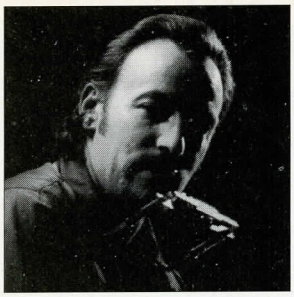
SET NOTES: Same as 3/16 except Bruce played "Reason" in place of "Spare Parts."

3/20/96
DUBLIN, IRELAND
THE POINT DEPOT

SET NOTES: Same as 3/16 except included "Johnny 99" instead of "Murder Inc." and "Mansion" instead of "Nebraska."

Tour coverage will continue in *Backstreets* #53. E-mail your comments on upcoming shows to: joeroberts@aol.com. We also welcome comments, reviews, press, ticket stubs, etc. by mail or fax (206-728-8827). Special thanks to everyone who's kept us posted on the tour so far—the help we receive from readers is essential.

Special thanks go out to: Tor Aarnes, Charlotte Abo, Laura Adler, Bruno Alligorides, Karsten Stanley Anderson, David Atlas, Alfonso Augelli, Doug Baker, Kevin Baker, Roar Bakken, John Bakuhn Jr., Kenny Barr, Ken Baum, Gary D. Benz, Harry Blaisure, Falk von Boehn, Darren Bonk, Ron Boster, Jean-Luc Botto, Michael Bournazian, Scott Bradley, Allen Brawer, Peter Brockenbrow, Jen Brown, John Cari, Jakob Christiansen, Pete Church, John Clutterbuck, Jonathan Coe, Anthony Comitini, Jim Condo, Sean Cronin, Daniel Cunningham, Pat and Sean Curry, Bill Curtis, Eric Davis, Marco D'Elia, Mary Ellen D'Entremont, Rob DePetris, Carl DePrima, Ralf Dissmann, Steve Dittmore, Jim Donnelly, John Duda, Dan Dufner, Sven Duve, Nigel Dyer, Eric Eisenstein, Jeff Falk, John Fix, Erik Flannigan, Tom Friedrich, Joseph Gallo, Chuck Garfien, Steve Gelobter, Chris Gibson, Bernd Gillrath, David Glacken, Andrus Gonzalez, Mike Gorton, Paola Grazili, David Gregory, Jack Grosso, Tom Hanna, Bert Haughin, Wayne Hebard, Ray Hersh, Peter Inghelbrecht, Linda Iorio, Bill Irwin, Josh Jacobson, Kevin Jessop, Doug Jones, Stefan Jonsson, Phil Jump, Steve Jump, Tom Jump, Brad Kaplus, Chris Kissell, Dave Klavon, Bill King II, Pete Lambie, Anna Lattanzio, Thierry Le Crane, Jeff Leikin, Ken Lesnick, Joe Lewin, Steve Liloia, Don Loeffler, Anthony Loiacono, Mike MacDonald, Eric McConnell, Matt Magee, Wilfred Major, Paul Malyn, Riccardo Marcante, Kirk Marley, Steve Marlin, Antoine Mas, Marvin Matthews, Matthias et. al. from Muenster, Steve Mazur, Jorge Mehlow, Dave Melbourne, Lynn Mikulsky, Greg Miller, Line Therese Naevestad, Jonathan Neal, Fred Newhard, Jim Oleske, Rob van Oostrum, Hans van Os, Rob Oslan, Chris Papaleonardos, Michelle Paponetti, Jeremy Parkinson, Phil Parr, Brad Paulsen, Jon Phillips, Joseph Piewkowski, Jon Pont, Diane Portantiere, Bernie Ranellone, Stefan Rathmann, Greg Reiser, Christoph Riesch, Andrew Ritwo, Robert Rizzuti, Steve Robinson, Erik van Roovert, Rick Saba, Mike Saunders, Henry Schaffer, Wilco Schepen, Katrin Schlemmer, John Schlicher, Arlen Schumer, Mark Scully, Mark Shull, Celeste Sibbio, Lynn Smilow, Brian Smyth, George Sofranko Jr., Steve Speir, Florian Spintler, Michele Stadnik, Robert Staedter, Phil Stanley, Jason Straus, Brian G. Svoboda, Steve Svoboda, Brian Sysco, Sue Talbot, Toshi Tanahashi, Urs Tanner, Mike Thompson, Steven Thomson, Virginia Tixi, Joe Vernon, Joanne Volpicella, Frank Wallmeier, Sarah Weisman, Susan West, Mary Beth Wilson, Doreen Wood, Bob Zimmerman, Margaret Znidarsic, and John Zur, plus all the other fans who helped out, sent a clipping in, faxed a review or gave us an update.



	NOVEMBER						DECEMBER														
	New Brunswick	*Red Bank*	*Los Angeles*	*Los Angeles*	*Berkeley*	*Berkeley*	*Chicago*	*Washington, D.C.*	*Washington, D.C.*	*Upper Darby*	*Upper Darby*	*NYC*	*NYC*	*Boston*	*Boston*	*NYC*	*Montreal*	*Toronto*	*Detroit*	*Detroit*	*Youngstown*
	21 NJ	**22 NJ**	**26 CA**	**27 CA**	**29 CA**	**30 CA**	**3 IL**	**5 DC**	**6 DC**	**8 PA**	**9 PA**	**12 NY**	**13 NY**	**15 MA**	**16 MA**	**17 NY**	**7 CAN**	**8 CAN**	**10 MI**	**11 MI**	**12 OH**
GHOST OF TOM JOAD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
ADAM RAISED A CAIN	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
STRAIGHT TIME	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
HIGHWAY 29	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
DARKNESS	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
MURDER INC.	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6			6	6
JOHNNY 99																		6	6		
NEBRASKA	7		7	7	7	7	7	7		7		7		7		7	7	7	8		
POINT BLANK		7																			
STATE TROOPER																					
MANSION ON THE HILL									7		7		7		7					7	7
IF I SHOULD FALL BEHIND	8	8	8																		
SELL IT																			9	8	8
LITTLE THINGS				8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8		8	9			
THE WISH																8					
BROTHERS															9	9	9	10	10	9	9
BORN IN THE USA	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	10	10	10	11	11	10	10
DRY LIGHTNING	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	11	11	11	12	12	11	11
SPARE PARTS	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11			11				12	12	12	13	13	12	12
REASON TO BELIEVE									11	11		11	11	11							
YOUNGSTOWN	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	13	13	13	14	15	14	13
SINALOA COWBOYS	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	14	14	14	15	16	15	15
THE LINE	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	15	15	15	16	17	16	16
BALBOA PARK	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	16	16	16	17	18	17	17
THE NEW TIMER						16	16	16		16	16	16	16	16							
ACROSS THE BORDER	16	16	16	16	16	17	17	17	16	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	18	19	18	18
DOES THIS BUS STOP	17	17	17	17	17	18	18	18	17	18		18	18	18	18	18	18	19	20	19	19
BLINDED BY THE LIGHT											18										
BOBBY JEAN																					
THIS HARD LAND	18	18	18	18	18	19	19	19	18	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	20	21	20	20
DEAD MAN WALKIN'	19		19	19	19	20	20	20										8	7		
STREETS OF PHILLY		19							19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	21	22	21	21
GALVESTON BAY	20	20	20	20	20	21	21	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	22	23	22	22
PROMISED LAND															22	22	22	23	14	13	14
NO SURRENDER																			24	23	23
MY BEST	21	21	21	21	21	22	22	22	21	22	22	22	22	22	23	23	23	24	25	24	24
BLOWIN' DOWN THE ROAD																					

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN SOLO ACOUSTIC

THE GHOST OF TOM JOAD TOUR 1995-96

JANUARY								FEBRUARY														MARCH								
Cleveland	*Cleveland*	*St. Louis*	*New Orleans*	*Houston*	*Austin*	*Dallas*	*Atlanta*	*Frankfurt*	*Dresden*	*Munich*	*Hamburg*	*Dusseldorf*	*Paris*	*Paris*	*Rotterdam*	*Amsterdam*	*Manchester*	*Birmingham*	*Newcastle*	*Edinburgh*	*Stockholm*	*Oslo*	*Copenhagen*	*Belfast*	*Dublin*	
16 OH	**17 OH**	**18 MO**	**22 LA**	**23 TX**	**25 TX**	**26 TX**	**28 GA**	**12 GER**	**14 GER**	**15 GER**	**17 GER**	**18 GER**	**21 FRA**	**22 FRA**	**25 HOL**	**26 HOL**	**28 ENG**	**29 ENG**	**2 ENG**	**3 SCO**	**13 SWE**	**14 NOR**	**16 DEN**	**19 IRE**	**20 IRE**	
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	**TOM JOAD**
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	**ADAM**
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	**STRAIGHT**
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	**HWY 29**
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	**DARKNESS**
6				6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6			6	6			6	6	6		**MURDER**
	6	6	6													6	6			6	6				6	**JOHNNY**
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10	10	10	11	10	10	11	10	10	10	10	11	10	10	10	10	10	10	12	12	10	12	10	11	11	11	**BUSA**
11	11	11	12	11	11	12	11	11	11	11	12	11	11	11	11	11	11	13	13	11	13	11	12	12	12	**DRY**
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17	17	16	17	16	16	17	16	16	16	16	17	16	16	16	16	16	16	18	18	16	18	16	17	17	17	**BALBOA**
																										NEW TIMER
18	18	17	18	17	17	18	17	17	17	17	18	17	17	17	17	17	17	19	19	17	19	17	18	18	18	**BORDER**
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																										BLINDED
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20	20	19	20	19	19	20	19	19	19	19	20	19	19	19	19	19	19	21	21	19	21	19	20	20	20	**THL**
	7		7								8							8	8		8					**DEAD MAN**
21	21	20	21	20	20	21	20	20	20	20	21	20	20	20	20	20	21	22	22	20	22	20	21	21	21	**STREETS**
22	22	21	22	21	21	22	21	21	21	21	22	21	21	21	21	21	22	23	23	21	23	21	22	22	22	**GALVESTON**
14	14	13	14	22					24		24		23	23		22	23	24	24	22	24	22	23	23	23	**PROMISED**
23	23	22	23		22	23	22	22	22			22		22	22											**NSURREND**
24	24	23	24	23	23	24	23	23	23	22	23	23	22		23											**MY BEST**
					24																					**BLOWIN'**

ON COLLECTING

By Richard Breton and Lynn Elder

For the benefit of our readers, *Backstreets* magazine provides ratings of unauthorized releases currently in circulation. Don't write us asking where these can be obtained. *Backstreets* in no manner, shape, or form endorses these recordings. These reviews are provided by our columnists solely for informational purposes. Despite these words of warning, some collectors will still seek this material out, and for those collectors, our reviews should help you steer clear of the real losers.

Unauthorized CDs are growing in numbers and with that growth, expect some real ripoffs—our advice is let the buyer beware, and demand to listen to material before you buy it. Each title here has been rated for packaging, performance, and sound quality on a scale from one to ten, one being awful, and ten being quality generally found on legitimate releases.

•Sour Grapes
(Babyface, 2CD)
108 minutes
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 8
Performance: 8

Bootlegs derived from the current tour are very slowly being released. Predictably, a few of these contain material from broadcast sources (the partial Philadelphia 12/8/95 broadcast, the "Late Show," "Tonight Show" and Sinatra tribute appearances, the interview with Bob Costas, etc.) along with a chosen few tracks from various shows from the first leg of the tour derived from the best audience tape sources. This title is the first so far to present a complete show.

Included are 21 songs from the November 26, 1995, show at the Wiltern Theater in Los Angeles, California. The recording is very clean, but somewhat distant. At this point, it was still very early in the first leg of the tour. The show is relatively short at only 108 minutes, and after hearing several tapes from this leg of the tour, there are no performances to be found here that stand out above the rest. Several tunes fall short. Only "If I Should Fall Behind" hasn't been surpassed since; then again, it hasn't been performed since either.

Still, it's good that this part of the tour has been documented on CD. At the time, Bruce was still grappling with the set lists, arrangements and length of the show in an attempt to achieve a balance between despair and-hope. This was before Bruce decided to include a song in the middle to lighten the mood a bit, or to add a more songs to lengthen the show. But even if the overall tone of this show leans towards the darker side, there was a certain "feel" to these shows that was closer in spirit to the new album.

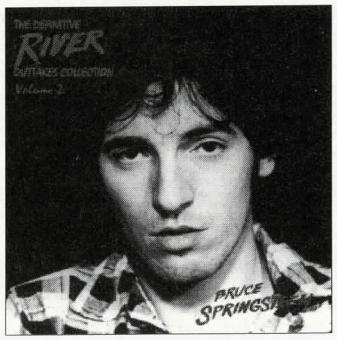
If you caught any of the early shows and want to relive that feeling, this title goes a long way towards capturing it. So far the best shows from this tour, or even from the first leg, have yet to be released. Here's hoping someone gets smart and releases the 12/16 Boston and 12/17 New York shows, which are arguably the best shows from the first leg.

•The Definitive River Outtakes Collection Volume Two
(E. St. Records, 2CD)
116 minutes
Packaging: 9
Sound Quality: 6-10
Performance: 8

Last issue we reviewed E. St.'s *The Definitive River Outtakes Collection Volume One*, easily the best collection of demos and outtakes assembled for the studio sessions which led to the recording of *The River*. Now E. St. Records has done it again. *Volume Two* continues in the same vein as *Volume One*, containing 34 additional tracks, and the sound quality is as good as it gets. What sets *Volume Two* apart is that it contains more songs that have never been booted before.

This set suffers the fate of similar outtake sets in that it contains songs and/or multiple takes of songs that are not that different from each other or from released versions, especially in the cases of "Out in the Street" (two takes), "Crush on You" (two takes) and "I Wanna Marry You" (four takes). There are plenty of different songs here, though, including alternate takes/mixes of "Roulette," "Cadillac Ranch,", "Fade Away," and "Ramrod." Highlights include the previously unbooted Bruce's solo home demo of "Jackson Cage" from 1979, a great full band version of "From Small Things (Big Things One Day Come)," an instrumental version of "Hungry Heart" and a great-sounding version of "Take 'Em As They Come."

The last ten songs have never surfaced before, and are a rather mixed bag. Sound-wise they range from just good to very good. Most of the songs are



musically and/or lyrically unfinished, and Bruce's vocals are usually buried in the mix. Supposedly taken from unknown E Street band rehearsals in 1979, the highlights include the previously unknown "What's the Matter Little Darling?"; an early version of "Out in the Street" with different lyrics called "I'm Gonna Be There Tonight"; and the earliest known take of "Mary Lou," which eventually became "Be True." Several more songs are taken from the original *The Ties That Bind* title. In fact between *Volume One* and *Volume Two*, nine out of the ten songs from *The Ties That Bind* are accounted for (only "The River" is missing). As with *Volume One*, the liner notes here are well written. For lovers of *The River* album, this one is recommended.

•You Better Not Touch Vol. 2
(Crystal Cat)
78 minutes
Packaging: 9
Sound Quality: 10
Performance: 7

While the bulk of this release is from the "Blood Brothers" videodocumentary (specifically from the bootlegged video), the rest is from Bruce's portion of the Bridge School benefit show from Mountain View, California on October 28, 1995. The title alludes to the original "You Better Not Touch" on GoGo Records, which documented Bruce's appearance at the first Bridge School benefit show in 1986.

The tracks from the "Blood Brothers" documentary are fine, although some of the snippets are little more than filler. Suffice it to say that "Back in Your Arms Again" is a *great* song deserving of official release, and that "Without You" is a "Sherry Darling" for the '90s. The most fascinating tracks prove to be the various takes of "Blood Brothers," which had the most drastic changes during the sessions. Even though the sound is great and it's nice to have on CD, I'd much rather watch the proceedings on video. Between the Disney broadcasts and rumors of an official release of the video (and, I presume, laserdisc), there just isn't much reason to recommend this disc on these tracks alone.

Which leads to Bruce's 1995 Bridge show appearance documented here. The good news is the sound. Regardless of this being an audience tape, the sound quality is simply outstanding. I was at the show, and it's exactly as I remember it. Unfortunately, the bad news is that it's exactly as I remember it—most notably the sound problems that mar "Seeds," "Adam Raised a Cain" and one or two other songs have been permanently preserved. While this show marked the live premieres of "Sinaloa Cowboys" and "The Ghost of Tom Joad," the performances of these songs on the current tour have been greatly improved. In fact none of these songs are noteworthy, save for this being the last performance of "Seeds" and the one-off performance of a snippet of "I Don't Want Anymore of This Army Life" with references to baseball (the World Series was being played the same night). To top it off, Bruce isn't very audible during the duet with Neil Young on Neil's "Down by the River" either. (Truth be told, I'm waiting for the inevitable Neil Young discs to surface from this show. Neil & Crazy Horse were definitely *on* that night.) Those expecting a worthy successor to the original *You Better Not Touch* will be disappointed. The completist will want this disc. The rest may want to pass on it.

Next issue: an extended review section covering more boots from the new tour.

CLASSIFIEDS

PERSONALS

PETE DEPAUL, SEPT. 1947-APRIL 1995. BRUCE'S biggest fan. We miss you. Chris, Frankie, Virginia, Dave, Ritchie, Annette, Ken, Pat and John.

TO MARY, FROM 57TH STREET TO THUNDER Road, From Darlington County through Youngstown via Balboa Park, you are always in my heart. Love, Anthony.

MARY-CHAPIN CARPENTER FANS WANTED TO exchange concert/music experiences. M. Conens, 2300 E. Barnett Rd., Medford, OR 97504.

MR. BRUCELEGS: "TAKE ME NOW AS THE SUN descends." Happy Anniversary, with all of my love, Mrs. Brucelegs.

THANKS TO ALL THE WONDERFUL FOLKS I MET last December during the East coast tour, who shared the lines, the talks, the tickets, and everything else: George, Patrick, the Canadian and British girls, and all the New Yorkers. Hope to see all of you in Europe. Ciao Bernie, you're more than just a friend. Sergio, ITALY.

PITTSBURGH BRUCE FANS: I'M BACK IN THE 'Burgh and looking for fans to trade tapes, road trips, etc. Drop a line to: Bert Haughin, 201B McKnight Circle, Pittsburgh, PA 15237.

BRAZILIAN BRUCE FAN LOOKS FOR PEN PALS from all over the world, no matter your age, sex, or music interests. Write in English, German, French, Portuguese or Spanish. José, P.O. Box 133, CEP 57300, Arapiraca-AL, BRAZIL.

MARRIED COUPLE AGES 26 AND 29 WOULD LIKE pen pals from the U.S. Debbie and Marco Cesio, 11 Norfolk Close, Horley, Surrey, RH6 7DW.

27-YR.-OLD BRUCE FAN FROM AUSTRALIA lookin' for a connection. I'm sick of sittin' around waitin' for my life to begin, I'd like to meet a woman (21-30), who I can share some "Better Days" with. If you're interested write to: Adrian Chambers, Unit 2, 117 Chalk St., Lutwyche 4030 Brisbane, QLD, AUSTRALIA.

STINE, MY SPECIAL ONE. I LOVE YOU, MARTIN.

ANYBODY OUT THERE REMEMBER THE BRUCE fanzine "No Surrender"? If you do, please write me! My life is a Bruce song through and through. I'd love to hear from you. Tom, 706 Manor Dr., Dublin, PA 18917.

WANTED

WELL, HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS? HAVE/WANT Springsteen (1969-1996), Dead, Dylan, and others. Beginners welcome. EJK, 4917 Andros Dr., Tampa, FL 33629.

WANTED: SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY RUFF STUFF CD. Any price paid. Greg Hansford, 6011 Bingley Rd., Alexandria, VA 22315. (703) 922-5919.

PHOTOS AND/OR QUALITY AUDIO OF Houserockers 10/24/95 show at Park West, Chicago. Prefer to trade. Tom Pareti, (312) 774-7128.

LOOKING FOR '96 MIDWEST SHOW, I.E. DETROIT. Will trade blanks or something from my list. Dan, 1070 Rushmore, Jenison, MI 49428.

GEORGE AND C.C. LONG TIME TAPE TRADERS are back. Your list gets ours. George, P.O. Box 271, A-1091, Vienna, AUSTRIA.

WANTED: BRUCE AT BERKELEY, 11/30/95. PLEASE call Bruce at (510) 277-1627. I can offer blank trade only.

WANTED: PICTURES FROM JANUARY 11, Detroit. Especially after show. Also need tour videos. Paul Malyn, 3220 Croissant, Dearborn, MI 48124.

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WANTED: RARE 7" AND 12" TO BUY OR TRADE, have German promo 7". Matthias Pollman-Schult, Sonnenallee 218, 12059 Berlin, GERMANY.

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WANTED: PHOTOS FROM DEC/JAN SHOWS. Especically Toronto, Detroit, Youngstown, Cleveland. From before, during, or after shows. Call Judi Johnson, (313) 522-6363, collect after 6 p.m. or write 33550 N Hampshire, Livonia, MI 48154.

DESPERATELY LOOKING FOR TICKET STUBS AND photos from May 9/10, 1988, shows at Met Center. I will trade shows for them! Mike, 2078 Princeton Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105-1117. (612) 699-1177.

WANTED: HIGH-QUALITY AUDIO OF BRUCE AND other acts. I have massive collection to trade, incl. DAT. Will accept blanks too. Send list/write to: David Sureck, 4038 Buxton Rd., S. Euclid, OH 44121.

WANTED: ONE COMPLETE HIGH-QUALITY CD OR cassette copy of Columbia Radio Hour with Bruce live at Tower Theater. Shawn, 342A Hollis St., Crum Lynne, PA 19022-1126. Phone: (610) 521-5711.

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WINTER/SPRING 1996

Continued from page 5

not benefit from our social welfare system unless their children are born here and generally live in the underground economy, millions of U.S.-born individuals also lack jobs, health and life insurance, pension plans, homes or access to social welfare programs. Approximately 40 million U.S. residents lack health insurance, the vast majority of whom are legal citizens. Untold millions no longer qualify for unemployment benefits and are therefore not counted in the jobless rate, nor are they assisted by government- or company-paid training and placement services.

Our social welfare system can't accommodate everyone who needs help and it only provides a little aid for a limited time, after which people depend on themselves or on the mercy of charitable organizations, whose declining funds are stretched thinner annually. The "happenstance of birthplace" is not the issue, nor is it the cause of dislocation or lack of economic opportunity for most people here, unless we think that being a U.S. citizen at the end of the 20th century is a stroke of bad luck. Another negative side-effect of "the new world order" is that everything must be apportioned and that rationing must be justified to those who pay for it.

Illegal aliens appear in four of the songs on *Tom Joad*. In the other songs the characters' ethnicity, race or legal status aren't relevant to their stories and aren't mentioned. Does it matter? Does not belonging to any particular ethnic group diminish their suffering? Does it make their despair or rage any less meaningful?

Charles also thinks that "Youngstown" is "less detailed" than the other songs on the album. He says that "the last verse suggests a darkness not foretold in the rest of the song" and remarks that it's unclear what the line about "the fiery furnaces of hell" might mean. Oh? To me, "Youngstown" is a miniature oral history of industrial America. The fury in the last verse is the natural culmination of the sacrifice, hard work and reversal that have been chronicled earlier. Many former manufacturing workers feel that they were betrayed by their former employers, with the connivance of their government, and that the world they created has been destroyed. The narrator's rage and confusion are understandable—if I had devoted my life to what I considered to be building and saving my country and then found myself thrown out on the scrap-heap by my fellow citizens and government, I might also prefer the devil's company. One last point: a man who's proud of having "won this country's wars" would not have regrets about contributing to the arms race!

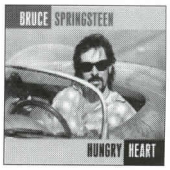
Anne Hafrey
Cambridge, MA

JAPANESE MASTERSOUND CDs

Just released in very limited editions, these CDs use the 20 Bit Mastering/Super Bit Mapping that provided such phenomenal sound on the US Born to Run *Mastersound CD. The added bonus in these discs is the packaging, always well-done in Japan, and here it's really something special. The CDs have been packaged to look like miniature LPs: housed in a thick cardboard sleeve that looks just like the LP cover with a plain inner sleeve that pulls out and contains the CD itself. The cardboard jacket with obi is then slipped into a thick, clear plastic sleeve to keep it protected.*

•BORN IN THE USA For years the Japanese Mastersound vinyl was the medium of choice for the best sound on this album, but now there's finally a *CD* to rival it. Of course the sound was never bad on this album to begin with, but with this Super Bit Mapped disc you'll notice a brighter and deeper sound, with clarity you've never heard before. Contains a lyric sheet in Japanese and English that slips out of the jacket, just like a mini-LP. Amazing! While they last.....$32

•BORN TO RUN Of course the Super Bit Mapped *BTR* has been available in the US for a while now, but packaging-wise this is an absolute gem. When we said these look like miniature LPs, we meant it: this nice cardboard sleeve is a gatefold! Just like the original LP, it folds out to reveal the lyrics (in English) and photo of Bruce. Also contains a lyric sheet in Japanese and English inside. Especially worth it if you still haven't dropped the bucks for the US Mastersound—at a comparable price, this is definitely the one to get.....$32



MORE IMPORT CDs

•CLARENCE CLEMONS: RESCUE New Japanese reissue! The Big Man's first (and best), *Rescue* includes the Springsteen-penned "Savin' Up." In jewelbox with obi. Finally on CD!.....$30

•JOHN EDDIE New Japanese reissue. Eddie's 1986 solo album includes "Jungle Boy." Max and Nils help out.....$30

•THE JUKES LIVE AT THE BOTTOM LINE Sony Japan just released this on compact disc, a killer Jukes performance that was originally pressed years ago as a promo-only LP. Unbelievable sound on this does justice to the performance, making this a must-have. Ten tracks, including "The Fever" and "You Mean So Much to Me."".....$30

•"STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA" EURO CD5 This 4-track CD5 includes two live tracks never before on compact disc: "Growin' Up" and "The Big Muddy" from the *In Concert: MTV ~~Un~~plugged* performance.....$15

•"SECRET GARDEN" UK LIMITED EDITION CD5 Four tracks: Secret Garden/Secret Garden (string vsn)/Murder Inc. (live at Tramps)/Thunder Road (*MTV ~~Un~~plugged).* Purple PS.....$12

•"HUNGRY HEART" CD5 Out of Germany and Holland, this CD single includes 5 tracks, 4 of them live and previously unreleased: Hungry Heart, Hungry Heart Live in Berlin, plus three live tracks from Sony Studios, all with the E Street Band: Streets of Philly, Murder Inc., and Thunder Road!.....$15

TWO BRUCE CALENDARS FOR 1996!

The new UK calendar for 1996 is still available! This year's model from Oliver Books has 12 *full page* shots of Springsteen! We've shown a page on left so you can see the layout—the days of the month get low priority, but it's just to make room for some great shots of Bruce (sorry, no Julianne this year), 2 in black and white and 10 in full color!

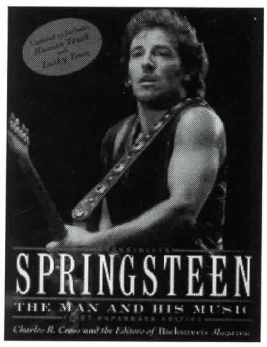
•1996 UK CALENDAR...$15

New this year is a special Bruce calendar from Europe, and it's practically the complete antithesis of the one from the UK. As shown on right, each month has plenty of space for writing, and lists important Boss events—concerts, etc.— that occurred on various dates over the years. No full page photos, but tons of smaller ones spread throughout, most corresponding with events, and many in color!

•1996 EURO CALENDAR...$15

BOTH 1996 CALENDARS FOR $25!

THE BACKSTREETS BOOK!

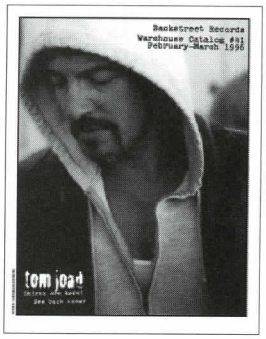


SPRINGSTEEN: THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC by Charles R. Cross and the Editors of Backstreets Magazine. This revised and updated paperback edition covers every facet of Bruce's performances from 1965 to 1992. Since the hardback edition, in addition to dozens of new photos unpublished anywhere else, we have completely updated and expanded the live chronology and studio sessionography sections. The result is the single most comprehensive source for information on Springsteen's career anywhere. Gorgeous softbound edition, essential for any Springsteen fan. 228 pages.....$19

•YOU BETTER NOT TOUCH By *Backstreets* reviewer Lynn Elder. This is the first complete guide to Springsteen on bootleg compact disc. Thorough, honest, and well-illustrated, vol. one of *YBNT* compiles reviews of the first 80+ titles in existence.....$10

•YOU BETTER NOT TOUCH 2 By *Backstreets* reviewer Lynn Elder. The sequel: *You Better Not Touch 2* picks up where the first guide left off, covering 150 CDs released since 1991.....$20

•50 GUARANTEED TIPS TO GREAT SPRINGSTEEN TICKETS By the editors of *Backstreets.* Packed with good advice on preparation, strategies, and general ideas on getting the best possible seats. With Springsteen playing small halls, a must-have!.....$8



BACKSTREET RECORDS CATALOG

Our catalogs include many more items—subscribe to receive them regularly and find out about new items right away: A one-year subscription (five issues of the catalog) is only $5 in the U.S. and Canada, $8 overseas.

COMING SOON: UK "Tom Joad" CD single with 3 Manchester live tracks; UK "Tom Joad" 7-inch pic disc; two Grushecky CD singles with live b-sides from the October Assault (with Bruce), more. Call for info or subscribe to the catalog!

TO ORDER: U.S. Customers, please add shipping charges (see below) and mail with check, money order, or credit card info (MC/VISA) to Backstreet Records, PO Box 51219, Seattle, WA 98115. Or CALL to order (206) 728-7603, 9:30-5:00 pacific, Monday-Friday. FAX anytime, (206) 728-8827.

Canadian Customers, please add $3 to U.S. shipping.

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